News in the Age of Empire: Two War Scandals

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Abstract

This thesis argues that the motivations underpinning the mainstream news media have fundamentally changed in the 21st century. As such, the news is no longer best understood as a tool for propaganda or agenda setting; instead it seems that the news is only motivated by the flow of global network capitalism. The author contrasts the work of Noam Chomsky and Edward S. Herman with that of Gilles Deleuze. Chomsky and Herman's 'Propaganda Model' has been influential within the fields of media studies and popular culture. The 'propaganda model' states that the concentration of ownership of the media has allowed the media elite to exert a disproportionate amount of influence over the mass media. Deleuze, on the other hand, regards the mass media as being yet another cog within the global capitalist mechanism, and is therefore separate from ideology or propaganda. The author proposes that 'propaganda' is no longer a sufficient word to describe the function of the news as terms like 'propaganda' imply some form of national sovereignty or governmental influence.

To highlight how the news has changed from an instrument of propaganda to an instrument of accumulation, the author compares and contrasts the coverage of the Abu Ghraib Prison Scandal with that of the Haditha Civilian Massacre. Although similar in nature, the author proposes that the Abu Ghraib Prison Scandal received a disproportionate amount of coverage within the mainstream press because of its exciting and sensational nature.

Two War Scandals - Preface

In April of 2004, accounts of torture, abuse, humiliation and homicide of the inmates at Abu Ghraib Prison began to surface. The story was accompanied by numerous photographs depicting acts of torture and abuse by US soldiers on Iraqi detainees. One of the more iconic images from the scandal depicted a hooded prisoner, with arms outstretched toward either side of the picture's border, with electrified wires running from his fingertips to his genitals. The pictures were gruesome, and gave a far harsher impression of the war in Iraq than that that was being shown on the evening news. Like most people, when I first saw the images I was shocked. Unlike most people I wasn't shocked so much by the acts themselves, but by the fact that they had been photographed. For me, the real horror of the images wasn't that such acts occur or that people are capable of committing such acts, but in the fact that the American soldiers depicted in the photographs seemed to be proud of what they were doing. Not unlike a hunter or a fisherman posing with the day's kill, each of the soldiers shown in the photographs seemed to glow with a sense of accomplishment.

According to Susan Sontag, "for a long time – at lease six decades – photographs have laid down the tracks of how important conflicts are judged and remembered" (Sontag 25). "The Western memory museum," continues Sontag, "is now mostly a visual one" (Sontag 25). To a staggering degree, people see and relate images from magazines, photographic essays and news broadcasts with world events. This association is in part due to the mantra of the news as a

window onto the world. What impact then would the photographs from Abu Ghraib have on how Americans remember the war in Iraq?

Sontag believed that the photos from Abu Ghraib would become the defining association for most Americans regarding the war in Iraq (Sontag 25). The images from Abu Ghraib would become as iconic as other images of conflict, such as those of a lone protestor standing in the way of a tank at Tiananmen Square, and of a nude Vietnamese girl fleeing her burning village. However, Sontag could not have anticipated the degree of backlash the photographs would receive from both the public and the news media itself (Sontag 42). Whistleblowers and anyone willing to report on the story as it developed were treated as traitors. As Republican Senator James Inhofe testified, he was "more outraged by the outrage" over the photographs than by what the photographs show (Sontag 42). "These prisoners," Senator Inhofe explained, "they're not there for traffic violations… they're murderers, they're terrorists, they're insurgents. Many of them have American blood on their hands, and here we're so concerned about the treatment of those individuals" (Sontag 42). Inhofe went on to say: it's the fault of "the media" for provoking and continuing to provoke further violence against Americans around the world (Sontag 42). Despite this backlash, the Abu Ghraib story received a fair amount of international attention. Duplicates of the images graced the covers of magazines and newspapers the world over. Despite the politics behind its publication, the media's stance on covering Abu Ghraib was clear – Abu Ghraib sells newspapers and pulls in ratings.

But the world keeps turning, and it wasn't long until both the public and the media grew tired of Abu Ghraib. Despite an ongoing investigation and numerous dishonourable discharges, news of the Abu Ghraib prison scandal soon disappeared from the limelight. And then, on November 19th, 2005, barely a year after news of the Abu Ghraib Prison scandal first hit newsstands America's campaign in Iraq was once again shaken by news of another scandal. It seemed that a small group of US Marines had been accused of shooting and killing 24 Iraqi civilians in the city of Haditha. The mainstream news media's reaction to this new scandal was different from the first. Instead of a great swell of images, discussions and inquiries, the news media was, for the most part, unmoved by news of Haditha. In fact, Haditha was so neglected that news of the story barely penetrated the surface of the American public sphere.

First accounts of the Haditha story stated that the victims had been the unplanned casualties of a roadside bombing (McIntyre 2006). These reports came directly from military officials attempting to pre-empt the possibility of a scandal similar to that of Abu Ghraib (McIntyre 2006). However, images of what really transpired at Haditha soon came pouring in from locals and Iraqi news agencies. The collection of images depicted 24 civilians, all of whom were dressed in civilian clothing (McIntyre 2006). They showed women and children bent over and leaning against a wall where they had been shot at close, others laying face down with their faces covered – one woman had even been shot in bed (McIntyre 2006). All of the victims had clearly been shot – none appeared to have been killed by shrapnel as the Military had originally stated (McIntyre 2006).

What struck me as odd about the Haditha Massacre, and then later became the basis of my research, was that both the mainstream news media and the America public seemed equally complacent in dismissing the Haditha Civilian Massacre. At first I believed the lack of coverage of the Haditha Civilian Massacre lay in the fact that there was no comprehensive or sensational footage of the scandal. The news, especially televised news, relies heavily on images and video to sell stories, thus without images to drive a news story Haditha fell through the cracks of the mainstream headlines. But this scenario seemed unlikely considering the attention that Haditha had earned in the foreign press. For example, in the weeks following the events at Haditha, CNN World News had continual updates on the story as more and more details began to surface. I know this because I was in Europe from November through until January of 2005/2006. I had been following the Haditha story closely while overseas and was shocked to find that none of my friends or colleagues had heard much, if anything, about the story or the stakes it involved.

At first the lack of awareness regarding Haditha seemed like a great failure by the American news media. This was a monumental news story, one that I felt the press should have covered to the fullest degree. It wasn't until much later that I began to realize the news' inadequate coverage of the events at Haditha was actually the news working to its upmost capacity.

For this study I have chosen the Abu Ghraib Prison Scandal and the Haditha Civilian Massacre, because they are two very similar stories in nature and content, and seem to embody many of the limitations of the mainstream

news media. I would like to explore the question; if both news stories are sensational in their very nature and depict American soldiers acting badly - why should one story demand so much more attention by the mainstream press than the other?

I believe that the disproportionate amount of coverage that the Abu Ghraib Prison Scandal received compared to the Haditha Civilian Massacre points to a fundamental shift within the global news discourse with regards to the news' underlying motivation. I believe that the news is no longer best understood as a tool for propaganda or coercion. The problem with words such as 'propaganda' and 'bias' is that they imply that there is some form of government or sovereign state in place exerting its influence over the newsroom. Global news networks such as CNN are free from these types of pressures because they exist largely outside of the influence of any one government or state. CNN, to use the example again, has offices and reporters stationed all over the world and broadcasts from thirty distinct countries, and growing. As such, it seems that the only rule that the global news empire is forced to abide by is the rule of global capitalism. Thus, I believe that the Abu Ghraib Prison Scandal received such a disproportionate amount of coverage within the mainstream press because of its exciting and sensational nature. In such instances it seems that journalistic rigour runs only as deep as the news agencies bottom line.

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Introduction - News in the Age of Control

In "Discipline and Punish" Michel Foucault describes the ways in which power became diffused across society. As Foucault describes, prior to the 17th century the lines of power were clearly marked, stemming from some form of monarchical power. In the years that would follow we witnessed the power of the monarchy dissipate and spread to powerful institutions such as the prison, the factory, the school, the family et cetera (Foucault 210). This decentralization of power ushered society into a new era of control and confinement – power no longer stemmed from the judge's gavel or the police officer's baton but rather from your closest friends, co-workers and family members.

In "panopticism" Foucault envisioned a model of control and confinement designed to understand the complex system of control and self-censorship that has taken hold within the West. It is a system wherein men and women become the wardens of their own lives, and the will and power of the state penetrates even the most personal institutions of our day-to-day lives (Foucault 200). Here Foucault is borrowing from British philosopher and thinker, Jeremy Bentham. Bentham envisioned a circular prison, placing a solitary guard atop a centralized tower (Foucault 200). Prisoners were kept in small, backlit quarters - each facing the central tower (Foucault 200). They were made unaware, and kept separate from, other adjacent prisoners (Foucault 201). Bentham dubbed his prison, the Panopticon. The Panopticon worked on a very simple premise – the prisoners were made to feel as though they were constantly under surveillance. They could, however, never be certain of this as the lone guard was hidden from sight

within his post (Foucault 200). "Consequently," writes Foucault, "it does not matter who exercises power… any individual, taken almost at random, can operate the machine (the Panopticon): in the absence of the director, his family, his friends, his visitors, even his servants (Foucault 202). "Similarly," continues Foucault, "it does not matter what motive animates him: the curiosity of the indiscreet, the malice of a child, the thirst for knowledge of a philosopher who wishes to visit this museum of human nature, or the perversity of those who take pleasure in spying and punishing" (Foucault 202). In this way, the true power of the Panopticon lays in this anonymity. The prisoners of the Panopticon are left totally vulnerable and visible to the invisible attendant's gaze.

"But," as Foucault reminds us, "the Panopticon must not be understood as a 'dream building'" (Foucault 205). At its essence, the Panopticon "is the diagram of a mechanism of power reduced to its ideal form; its functioning, abstracted from any obstacle, resistance or friction, must be represented as a pure architectural and optical system: it is in fact a figure of political technology that may and must be detached from any specific use" (Foucault 205). Foucault believes that the walls of the Panopticon have been blown out and expanded across the whole of society. Instead of a centralized guard post, we have closed-circuit cameras, schoolmasters, neighbours, and any variety of observers, to ensure that we are monitoring our behaviour. In contemporary society, the panoptic eye can be asserted and imposed over any formal institution: the prison, the hospital, the school, the asylum, the factory, or the family (Foucault 205). This realization enabled Foucault to distinguish two models for discipline and the

governance of everyday life (Foucault 209). Just as in Bentham's first musings about the potential of the Panopticon within every disciplinary society, eventually, the people become their own wardens, guards, and magistrates without the need for direct coercion (Foucault 210). This is to say, people become as invested in maintaining the position of the dominant as the elite are invested in maintaining the people's subjugation. This realization brought Foucault to his notion of the 'disciplinary society' and the relationship between concepts of truth and power.

In "Truth and Power," Foucault outlines several principles of the modern disciplinary society and establishes what he calls the "political economy of truth (Foucault, "Truth and Power" 208). According to Foucault, truth is never outside of power (Foucault 208). There is no absolute truth outside of our societal, institutional miasma. As Foucault writes, "there is a battle for truth… one that ultimately determines what relationships, what knowledge, and what forms of power become naturalized within society" (Foucault 209). Within a disciplinary society truth can be used almost synonymously with power and concepts of right and wrong. As people move throughout the various institutions that govern society, power often dictates truth. Within the classroom, for example, the power of the instructor dictates what types of information constitute knowledge. If a child's behaviour or aptitude deviates from the teacher's norm, the child will be reprimanded and penalized. The child can even be held back and alienated from their peers if his or her behaviour does not align within the teacher's marker of acceptable deviation.

The same kind of institutional reprimands can be seen in the newsroom. As I will later discuss in greater detail, the hierarchies and bureaucracies that determine what make it to camera or print have been well documented by scholars and analysts of the news media. As Eric Louw reminds us, there is an institutional bias within all newsrooms which are negotiated at every level of the production of an evening news cast (Louw 69). There are templates to follow, various editors and hiring and firing committees to name a few. First and foremost, however, there is an almost invisible, international precedent within the news industry dictating a story's "newsworthyness" (Louw 69). Only those stories which meet the criteria to be considered news worthy, a term that has become almost synonymous with sensational, and therefore sure to generate viewership/readership, will make it to print or air. Similarly, only those journalists, columnists, reporters and anchors that can abide by these rules will rise to the top of the news game and reach a national or international audience.

Through Foucault's eyes the news then is just another institution amongst the myriad of similar institutions that govern society's norms. Like the school the church, the factory and the prison, the news is arranged as a strict hierarchy, with the editors at the top and the journalists and reporters closer to the bottom. As in Panopticism, each player organizes his or her behaviour based upon the desire to do well and succeed with the hopes of someday advancing up the ladder or, conversely, out of fear of being penalized or fired. As in all institutions within the disciplinary society, eventually the objects of oppression and subjugation are made to be superfluous and eventually the prison guards, so to speak, can be

removed from the tower. The prisoners will thereafter auto-regulate their actions and beliefs out of habit.

Foucault's perceptions of power and control deviate from many of his contemporaries, such as Noam Chomsky and Edward S. Herman. *Manufacturing Consent: the Political Economy of the Mass Media*, Chomsky and Herman spoke of the power that the United States Administration has over setting the agenda for various intuitions, including mainstream news agencies. In the words of Chomsky and Herman, "the mass media serve as a system for communicating messages and symbols to the general populace… it is their function to amuse, entertain, and inform, and to inculcate individuals with the values, beliefs, and codes of behaviour that will integrate them into the institutional structures of the larger society" (Chomsky and Herman 1). Instead of institutions like the school, the hospital or the barracks shaping people's behaviour and creating norms within society, Chomsky and Herman suggest that, in addition to these institutions, the media plays a significant role in creating needs and manufacturing common sense. The "propaganda model" put forth by Chomsky and Herman focuses on the inequality of wealth and power between the media-rich and the media-poor, and its corresponding effects on society (Chomsky and Herman 2). Because of this inequality of access, the elite are able to naturalize certain relationships and force their own agenda's onto society. In terms of the mainstream news media, "the elite domination of the media and marginalization of dissidents that results from the operation of these filters occurs so naturally that media news people, frequently operating with complete integrity

and goodwill, are able to convince themselves that they choose and interpret the news 'objectively'" (Chomsky and Herman 2). Under this model, the news becomes transformed into a site for propaganda and the reinforcement of the ruling class values.

It seems to me that the vast majority of scholarly works published about news production and the media in general have been written from within this Syndicalist, Chomskian perspective. Eric Louw, for example, has worked very hard to demonstrate how institutional pressures, both from within a news agency and outside it, work to regulate and corrupt the information that makes it to print or broadcast (Louw 157). While still valid, I believe the problems undercutting the news media as an instrument of subjugation and propaganda cannot be explained as simply as a conflict between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. These terms are excellent for understanding subjectivity and locality, but seem obsolete when you consider the vast global networks involved in producing your typical newscast. The news is not local. Even local news broadcasts rely heavily on news agencies, such as Reuters or the Associated Press, for content. The concept of locality in news is further complicated by the emergence of the Internet as a legitimate and mainstream source of news and information. All of these channels exist outside of national borders and are, to a large extent, immune to governmental pressures. Rather, the market tends to dictate form and regulation within the mainstream news industry.

In his essay, "Control and Becoming," Gilles Deleuze outlines the complications of a society ruled by global capital. Deleuze's opinions differ

greatly from many of his contemporaries; Chomsky being among the most notable. For Deleuze, the issue is not about who has control and what agendas are being served and to what ends, instead he believes that the modes of reproduction have become so engrained within contemporary capitalist society that there is no end to their system of perpetuation in sight. According to Deleuze, within a "Control Society," nearly every facet of life is working in tandem with one another to ensure that the status quo is maintained (Deleuze 181). Similarly to Foucault's notion of discourse, Deleuze's society of control will continue to operate and expand without guidance or formal leadership. The path of history is therefore not dictated by ideology so much as it is by the systems of control. In Deleuze's society of control the primary tool for global confinement is capitalism (Deleuze 172). Global network capitalism becomes the universal mode of corralling and ordering all societies despite language, custom or national boundaries. As Deleuze writes, "in capitalism only one thing is universal, the market" (Deleuze 172). Deleuze continues, "there's no universal state, precisely because there's a universal market of which states are the centers, the trading floors" (Deleuze 172). Deleuze believes that the true governing body of global affairs has little to do with ideology or hegemony[1], but rather that politics and economics are inseparable aspects of each other.

Within the context of the news, news stories and global events are simplified and given attention only to the extent that they can stimulate viewership and generate advertising revenue. It is easy to see how an event

[1] Hegemony, a theoretical concept used to describe the domination of one social group over another. Within capitalist society, the dominant group is best understood as the wealthy or power elite.

such as Abu Ghraib could garnish the extent of the attention it did. Abu Ghraib was born out of sensationalism – it had all the sex and violence of a Jerry Bruckheimer movie and was accompanied by play-by-play photographs. The aftermath of the scandal, however, did not receive the same degree of attention. It seems that the court proceedings and sentencing were not nearly as newsworthy as the scandal itself. Now, Lynndie England, a woman prominently and infamously depicted in the Abu Ghraib photographs, is a household name though without the same level of infamy had her trial been covered by the 24-hour news networks. Instead, England and her exploits have been canonized within popular culture by university fraternities and various online blogs. 'Doing the Lynndie[2]' (striking a pose while holding a lit cigarette in your mouth and pointing away enthusiastically), is common-place at most university initiation and degradation ceremonies.

On the other hand, the tragedy at Haditha, which saw 24 Iraqi civilians murdered at the hands of a small group of American soldiers, was buried within the mainstream news. Haditha did not demand the same level of sensationalism because the action had failed to be photographed. In the end, we were left with a scenario wherein justice and journalistic rigour ran only as deep as the paper or news affiliate's bottom line. The difference highlights, as Deleuze said, how "a concern for human rights shouldn't lead us to extol the 'joys' of the liberal capitalism of which they're an integral part" (Deleuze 172-3). And so, instead of a romanticised concept of how the news and journalism ought to be, we are left

[2] For detailed and graphic examples of "doing a Lynndie," or "striking a Lynndie" see http://badgas.co.uk/lynndie/

with a multitude of distractions to ensure that the mechanisms of global capitalism continue unencumbered.

In chapter one I will present a case for the news as a tool for propaganda. This is an old rendition of a common story, but one that offers insight into the formal organization of the news. Here I will contrast the reality of the institutional framework of the news and the news aesthetic with the romanticized "window onto the world" rhetoric. In Chapter two I will look more closely at the tragedies at Haditha and Abu Ghraib and attempt to demonstrate that the news functions not only as a sight for propaganda, but also how it embodies many of the markers and symptoms of Deleuze's society of control. Finally, in chapter three I will look outside of the mechanisms of the mainstream media and assess the Internet and desktop journalism's potential for disruption.

Popular Paradoxes

There is a whole process of checks and balances that must be weighed before a cultural product can be considered part of popular culture. Typically, these qualifications are divided by questions of which rung of society the object d'art originated. One school of thought follows that in order to be part of the popular an object d'art must originate from within the working classes. This definition of popular culture opposes the notion that what is popular, that is, that which is produced for a mass audience, is popular culture. Frankfurt school thinkers such as Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer, offer an alternative to this definition. Adorno and Horkheimer propose that there is a cultural spectrum, with high/elite culture at one end and low/popular culture at the other. As Adorno and Horkheimer describe, the former "allowed the subscriber to play the role of subject… the latter turns all participants into listeners and authoritatively subjects them to broadcast programs which are all exactly the same" (Adorno and Horkheimer 72). In the eyes of Adorno and Horkheimer, what is popular is insuperably connected to the masses (Adorno and Horkheimer 32). Under this definition popular culture is produced by the media elite in order to appeal to the lowest common denominator and thus attract the greatest number of advertisers.

These contrasting definitions of popular culture create a grey zone that ensnares all of those cultural products which do not easily fall into either category. While it is easy to fit ripped jeans or folk music into the proletariat

model, just as it is easy for the Frankfurt school to condemn sitcoms and pop-music for being too homogenous, the news presents a much more difficult case. The televised news media by no means originate within the working classes. Likewise, the news does not easily fit along side the likes of Brittany Spears, Lindsay Lohan and Matthew McConaughey movies. In this introduction I aim to give a brief overview of some of the paradoxes of popular culture. Ultimately, I hope to show that the televised news industry is situated somewhere within the grey area of popular culture, neither belonging to the working classes, nor part of the homogenized, anaesthetizing "pap" of the cultural industry, but part of popular culture nonetheless.

What is Popular?

Classic definitions of popular culture tend to situate the origins of popular culture within the subordinate classes (Fiske 4). Here, popular culture is the answer to, or antithesis of, the dominant culture. "Popular Culture," as John Fiske writes, "is the culture of the subordinated and disempowered and thus bears within it signs of power relations, traces of the forces of domination and subordination that are central to our social system and therefore to our social experience" (Fiske 4). Under this definition popular culture is always reactionary. The subordinate classes, which do not have access to the means of production, create meaning along the lines of displacement, disfigurement, *detournement* and resistance. The poor use what is readily available to them in order to create their own goods and systems of meaning. However, this definition of popular culture is limited because it generalizes society into the elite and the poor - those

who produce culture and those whom actively resist the culture being imposed on them. While this is true to a certain extent, in most cases the lines of separation between the haves and the have-nots are not so rigid. There will always be those elements which bind and articulate these subsets to their parent culture (Bennett106).

As Andy Bennett explained in "Subcultures or Neotribes?" a person cannot exclusively exist within a sub-cultural, reactionary social sphere. Therefore, "those groupings traditionally theorized as coherent subcultures are better understood as temporal gatherings characterized by fluid boundaries and floating memberships" (Bennett 106). Inevitably, subaltern popular culture forms and objects d'art are discovered, castrated and worked back into the fold of mainstream society. The channel of least resistance through which subaltern aesthetics tend to find their way back into society is commerce.

In *Understanding Popular Culture*, John Fiske gives a detailed account of the schizophrenic relationship between subcultures and commerce. As Fiske writes, "the relationship between popular culture and the forces of commerce and profit is highly problematic" (Fiske 10). Fiske uses the example of torn blue jeans, the great symbol of youth rebellion, rock and roll and the working class, as his primary case study for understanding this contradiction. According to Fiske, blue jeans hold a special place within western society, both as a commodity and as an object of popular culture (Fiske 10). The jeans themselves, despite their class, social and cultural baggage, are a relatively benign cultural product – they are a composite of dyed cotton and thread, manufactured en masse for a mass

audience. But when they are purchased, worn and defaced they are made unique and signify on a completely different level (Fiske 10). "At the simplest level," writes Fiske, torn blue jeans are an "example of a user not simply consuming a commodity but reworking it, treating it not as a complete object to be accepted passively, but as a cultural resource to be used" (Fiske 10). Popular culture becomes a form of resistance as the proletariat disrupt the messages of the dominant culture, and transform mass objects into personal possessions.

Other cultural theorists, such as Theodore Adorno and Max Horkheimer, approach popular culture with far less romanticism. For Adorno and Horkheimer, all culture outside of the most elite social spheres has been seized and made ruin by the gleaming light of capitalism. As Adorno and Horkheimer write, "the striking unity of microcosm and macrocosm presents men with a model of their culture: false identity of the general and the particular" (Adorno and Horkheimer 32). "Under monopoly," continues Adorno and Horkheimer, "all mass culture is identical, and the lines of its artificial framework begin to show through" (Adorno and Horkheimer 32). Working-class music, folk-art and reclamations are all part of the broader capitalist driven culture industry because they are saturated, and thus tainted, by the same homogenized modes of production. From the Frankfurt School approach, the mainstream news is part of the popular because it is inevitably corrupted by pressures of capitalism. As I will discuss in greater detail in Chapter 1, journalists, editors and on-screen reporters are routinely pressured to conform to the tyranny of the lowest common denominator in order to provide advertisers access to the greatest audience possible (Louw 161).

The News as Popular Culture

So far we are left with a vision of popular culture as belonging to the working classes and the product of the laissez-faire, market driven, mainstream media elite. One originating from the top and the other belonging to the bottom. Neither definition is right just as neither definition can be wholly wrong. The mainstream news media proves both definitions to be true, but incomplete. On one hand, the news has always "belonged" to the working classes, dating back to the origins of tabloid news and the Yellow Press. The Yellow Press reached its peak in popularity by early 1900s (Becker 293). At this time, newspapers rarely published photos as they were seen as being too sensational and therefore beneath the high standards of professional journalism (Becker 293). The Yellow Press, on the other hand, was a much more visual news publication. Editors of the Yellow Press frequently used lithographs, cartoons and included dramatic re-enactments of court procedures and other major news events. This not only added a degree of sensationalism to the Yellow Press, but it also made it an immediate hit with the largely illiterate working-class (Becker 293). At present, the news media is inundated with photography, illustrations and photo-essays. The line separating hard journalism and the printed image has vanished from the newsroom, and the development of newer, faster and more accessible technologies has created the demand for even grittier, raunchier, more sensational images. There is still a hierarchy amongst news journals, particularly separating tabloid journalism from hard news, but this separation has more to do with content and reputation than the medium itself. In Canada, *The National Post*

and the *Toronto Star* have a much more credible reputation than say *Hello Magazine* (an international weekly celebrity tabloid featuring a Canadian edition). Nevertheless, it seems that the distance between the tabloid press and the legitimate press is shrinking – even the biggest names in the legitimate news business, CNN and BBC World News for instance, have a celebrity gossip column and broadcast content. Thus, saying that the "news" belongs exclusively to the elite and is in some way removed from the popular, or vice versa, becomes problematic.

The second way the news has breached the lexicon of popular culture is in the crystallization of the news aesthetic. Whether in print, radio or television, the news has a very strict format, which all players must adhere to (Morse 57). This "format" has created a working template for bloggers and would-be-reporters to produce their own content in print, or online. As Michael Strangelove cites, as of 2003 there were more than 500,000 online personal news and weblogs; many of which sported video content and audio files (Strangelove 184). Aside from a few aesthetic and budgetary limitations, these weblogs and vlogs were virtually indistinguishable from their mainstream counterparts. Much of the content online and from the margins was a mere carbon copy of the mainstream news media. Still, others used the web to share their unique stories and perspectives. These weblogs are produced in reaction against and to the mainstream news medium. This is an important aspect of online alternative media, not only because it indicates that the spread of information is opening up and becoming more democratic and accessible online, but it also indicates the

fluidity of the news medium. We see then that the news is not simply a tool of the elite to be viewed passively and regurgitated later; it is also a malleable style and aesthetic to be negotiated and played with by the subordinate classes. Like Fiske's torn blue jeans, the news then becomes an example of "a user not simply consuming a commodity but reworking it, treating it not as a complete object to be accepted passively, but as a cultural resource to be used" (Fiske 10). Therefore, commodities become the blank tablet through which popular culture is written.

Chapter 1: The News Monolith

Having Control, Saving Face and the Nightly News

"Meaning," as an abstract and figurative concept, is taken for granted nearly as often as are the sources and inventors of "meaning." Even above notions of signs, signifiers and signified; meaning and meaning-making play a fundamental role in how power relations are learned, taught and reproduced from person to person, generation to generation and from culture to culture. As Eric Louw writes, author of *The Media and Cultural Production*, "we are mental beings… ultimately the human capacity for language, sharing and comprehension involves an ability to make meaning, that is we are able to take in perceptions, process them, comprehend them and then share them with others" (Louw 1). Louw's description of the human desire to make and share meaning, at least in this instance, seems very crass. After all, in the wake of the twenty-four-hour-seven-day-a-week news network, all people's capacity for making and sharing meaning is not exactly equal.

The politics for understanding, deciphering and sharing meaning are embedded within a broader system of power. In an interview conducted by Alessandro Fontana and Pasquale Pasquino, Michel Foucault gives insights into what he referred to as "the political economy of truth" (Foucault 208). "Truth," according to Foucault, "isn't outside power" (Foucault 208). This is to say that, there is no absolute truth outside of our social, institutional miasma. Rather, "truth is a thing of this world: it is produced only by virtue of multiple forms of constraint… and it induces regular effects of power" (Foucault 208). According to Foucault, "each society has its regime of truth, its 'general politics' of truth: that

is, the types of discourse which it accepts and makes function as true" (Foucault 209). The single most important aspect of this discussion that Foucault touches on is the connection between truth and power. "There is a battle 'for truth,'" writes Foucault (Foucault 209), one that ultimately determines what relationships, what knowledge and what forms of power become naturalized within society (Foucault 209). "Truth" is then inseparable from both power and those who own power – "'truth' is linked in a circular relation with systems of power which produce and sustain it, and to effects of power which it induces and which extend it… a regime of truth" (Foucault 209). In the battle for truth and power in the 21st Century, the mainstream news media have a sizeable advantage over the individual. In this respect, the news can be seen as the quintessential apparatus through which power and information are disseminated to the public. The extensive global networks that the major news organizations have access to allow the producers and financiers of such programs to create a coherent and (relatively) unchallenged vision of the world. This is not to say that what is presented on the news is a bold-faced lie, but it would be grossly irresponsible to assume that these reports are completely "honest," "unbiased" or "objective." These synonyms for truth are especially problematic when you consider that the forum for negotiating these terms has been written by the very institutions that claim to uphold them.

In this chapter I will address some of the major ideological issues underpinning the news discourse. I hope to demonstrate that the news is not as benign as its rhetoric would have us believe. Above all, I want to show that the

news is a tangible and malleable site of cultural production; a site that is as open to, and subject to, the same kinds of manipulation and control as are other sites of popular culture. This is not to say that the news is inherently wicked – I wish to challenge the assumption that the news is an "objective" window to or "mirror" of reality. There are two areas of the news that I will be focusing on. First I will discuss the news' potential as a tool for political propaganda, and hopefully demonstrate how the "propaganda model" for understanding news production has become somewhat outdated. Secondly, I will begin my discussion of the news as it appears today at the forefront of global control by examining the aesthetic and methodological elements that underpin the news industry.

Manufacturing Informed Consent

In *Manufacturing Consent: the Political Economy of the Mass Media*, Edward S. Herman and Noam Chomsky discuss the ideological impact that the mainstream news media has on American society. According to Chomsky and Herman, "the media serve, and propagandize, on behalf of, the powerful societal interests that control and finance them" (Herman and Chomsky XI). Under Chomsky and Herman's "propaganda model," the news in all of its material manifestations functions to uphold the beliefs and agenda of a concentrated few, while simultaneously restricting thought, debate and the possibility of dissent. The level of coercion executed by the state is not articulated in overt ways, but is instead shaped through its repetition across the news discourse as a whole. What may appear to be a variety of different voices exercising a variety of

different opinions on any given subject is often a singular voice or opinion: disguised through repetition and its widespread publication.

As the name suggests, Chomsky's "propaganda model" can been used to explain how the interests of a concentrated few can become naturalized within society until they become generally accepted as the interests of many. In this way, the reality depicted by the news can be shown to reflect, and even mirror, the specific interests of the producers and financiers of a news publication. In one such example, Chomsky and Herman outline a distinction in the media's treatment of victims of enemy states, versus victims within one of the US's "client states."

Despite the media's claim to objectivity, a tangible distinction emerges between such states creating what Chomsky and Herman referred to as "worthy and unworthy victims" (Chomsky and Herman XIX). Worthy victims, those victims who are either clients of or the benefactors of the United States, receive much more gracious attention by the American media than those states which are unfriendly, or simply do not hold any immediate value to the US. As Chomsky and Herman describe, "the bias is politically advantageous to US policy-makers, for focusing on victims of enemy states shows those states to be wicked and deserving of US hostility; while ignoring US and client-state victims allows ongoing US policies to proceed more easily, unburdened by the interference of concern over the politically inconvenient victims" (Chomsky and Herman XX). This distinction has had some real and gaugeable effects on public opinion concerning foreign policy: "'Genocide,'" as Chomsky and Herman write, "is an

invidious word that officials apply readily to cases of victimization in enemy states, but rarely, if ever, to similar or worse cases of victimization by the United States itself or allied regimes" (Chomsky and Herman XX). One example of this kind of preferential treatment is the US news coverage of Saddam Hussein in the 1990s compared with that of Turkey. Both Iraq and Turkey underwent a similar campaign to eradicate their Kurdish populations but only one nation was backed by the United States. "Turkey's treatment of its Kurds was in no way less murderous than Iraq's treatment of Iraqi Kurds," but as far as US political officials and analysts were concerned, "Turkey only 'represses,' while Iraq engages in 'genocide'" (Chomsky and Herman XX).

Abu Ghraib is such an interesting example because it demonstrates this bias within a single story. In the case of Abu Ghraib, what began as a public outcry against a US-led torture exercise was transformed and retold as the unquestionable right of the US to defend itself (Sontag 42). Journalism and objectivity were seemingly tossed aside in order to construct a narrative around Abu Ghraib that would both subdue dissent by shifting the blame away from the Bush Administration, and restore public trust in their war effort. In "Regarding the Torture of Others," Susan Sontag discusses the nature of the pictures that were leaked from Abu Ghraib. For Sontag, what is terrifying about the photographs is not in what the images depicted but in the fact that the photographs were taken in the first place. Through Sontag's eyes, the pictures from Abu Ghraib were not tragic because of what was being done (hooded prisoners being threatened with electrocution and humiliation), but because of how closely the images mirrored

American life. The "photographs are us," exclaimed Sontag, because it is impossible to separate the images from American culture. This, combined with the specific policies and realities the Bush Administration has invested itself in, has made events like Abu Ghraib not only plausible, but likely.

This realization by the American media, at least at the mythological level of which Sontag was speaking is perhaps why the drastic rewrite of Abu Ghraib was undertaken. Before the spiral of self-condemnation and ill-sentiments towards America's war effort could take off at home, the media stepped in to do what it could to erase the scar that the Abu Ghraib scandal had left on the face of America. Before the finger of blame could be pointed at the Administration or at the policy-makers responsible for Abu Ghraib, the narrative being promoted by the media centered on the responsibility of the individual actors stationed at Abu Ghraib.

The ease with which Abu Ghraib was transformed from rampant human rights violation to a plausible defence strategy is shocking, but not surprising. To have covered Abu Ghraib in any way that would have hindered America's war effort or damaged the reputation of the Administration or the military, would have been like signing one's own death warrant. The news media are as reliant on state institutions, as state institutions are reliant on the news media. Surprisingly, however, this mutual dependency could be the most overt and honest aspect of the media's great propaganda-façade. Through a series of simple and widely publicized acquisitions the US military became the single greatest contributor to the news industry. In "Watch out Dick Tracy!," DeeDee Halleck outlines how this

takeover came to be. "From the cereal box to the TV set," writes Halleck, "the military is a part of everyday life in the United States" (Halleck 211). And the merger between RCA and General Electric has only made more obvious the kinds of "symbiosis that the military has had from the beginning with the major media corporations" (Halleck 211). GE and RCA have been two of the US military's largest contractors since before the Second World War. NBC was a subsidiary of RCA and is now, thanks to GE's recent acquisition, a large part of the "megamilitary corporation" the merger created (Halleck 211). Thus, one of America's largest names in news became a direct beneficiary of America's industrial military complex.

The collusion between the military and the major media networks has always existed. Even under the most benign motivations, the news has always been dependent on the military. This is especially true during times of war. During wartime, it is not unimaginable to see how military officials become active participants in the hiring/firing cycle of the newsroom. This is all part of the US military's larger shift towards calculated, Public Relation-ized warfare. "By 1990," writes Louw, "the US military had developed a new model of media-ized warfare in which public relations and psy-ops were central features of the planning and execution of the war" (Louw 177). The first Gulf War was organized and set-up as a tactical media operation requiring extensive, long-term planning and hegemonic strategizing. As Louw writes, "once military deployment began, the media were corralled and managed… Journalists were formed into 'pools' far removed from the battlefront, where military PRs could feed them information"

(Louw 178). Similar "pooling" techniques are used in America's current campaign in the Middle East. As before, journalists are only granted access to events that are strictly controlled. Censorship is achieved through limiting access to reporters and by carefully monitoring which reporters have access to what information. As a result, military officials have almost direct control over which journalists get published and even promoted.

This is especially problematic when you consider how the Abu Ghraib Prison scandal was first leaked in the US. The scandal was not the result of tireless sleuthing on the part of any particular reporter or news agency, but instead came from the arrogance of the soldiers stationed in Iraq. One of the soldiers had passed on copies of the photos to a friend looking for scenic shots of his stay in Iraq. The photos were later leaked to world news agencies and disseminated around the world via email. As Dora Apel explains in "Torture Culture, Lynching Photographs and the Images of Abu Ghraib," the photos were originally intended for use as political blackmail (Apel 90). As one government consultant admitted, "the purpose of the photographs was to create an army of informants, people you could insert back into the population" (Apel 90). This would explain why former Secretary of Defence, Donald Rumsfeld's, initial reaction to the photographs was not one of surprise or shock, but anger that the photos had gotten out (Apel 91). He immediately banned soldiers stationed in Iraq prisons from carrying cameras.

Rumsfeld's actions demonstrate the fear that the US military have of uncensored, unmediated information. They are fully aware that if their latest war

in the Middle East is not carefully Public Relation-ized, they stand to lose the support of the American population.

In both Chomsky and Herman's example and in Sontag's account of the Abu Ghraib Prison Scandal, the US Administration used its considerable power and influence to directly affect how news stories were covered and treated by the media. In one example, US allies were treated much more favourably than non-allies, despite similarities in bad behaviour. In the case of Abu Ghraib, responsibility for blatant human rights violations was placed on a series of individual actors, with little attention being paid to the policies and inactions that made it all possible. According to Chomsky and Herman, this propagandizing of the media is only made possible by the careful management of access to information of world events. In maintaining a monopoly of vision over global events, the media rich are able to exude a great degree of control and influence over the media poor. However, Chomsky and Herman's position is only valid so long as news is being produced from within a closed and heavily striated space. For all of Chomsky and Herman's brilliance, their propaganda model is contingent on the belief that there is some great ideologue or hegemonic elite, or alliance of elites, out there trying to impose their will onto the rest of society. Prisons, barracks, schools and hospitals are excellent examples of such closed spaces where ideology and ideological conformity are still possible, but as Deleuze reminds us, these spaces of confinement are being broken down (Deleuze 174). According to Deleuze, the old sites of confinement are collapsing "because they're fighting a losing battle... We're moving towards control societies

that no longer operate by confining people but through *contrôle continu*[3] and instant communication" (Deleuze 174). In the following passage, I will show how this new global ordering machine has affected the ways in which news is produced and circulated by highlighting how the news has shifted from a closed space comprised of individuals to a global network of dividuated "drudges."

The Media Masquerade

In an interview with Antonio Negri, Gilles Deleuze discusses, among other things, the lines of flight in which capitalist society is constantly being drawn. There is a departure here between the writings of Deleuze and Foucault. Where Foucault maintained that society was organized around the principles of confinement and the various hierarchies embedded within institutions, Deleuze believes that capitalist society has outgrown these machines of confinement and has been transformed into something much more fluid (Deleuze 172). For Deleuze, disciplinary societies, such as those described by Foucault, "operate by organizing major sites of confinement" (Deleuze 177). Deleuze continues, within such societies "individuals are always going from one closed site to another, each with its own laws: first of all the family, then school, then the barracks, then the factory, hospital from time to time, maybe prison" (Deleuze 177). But these sites of confinement are breaking down; they are being eroded to make way for the new global ordering machine – the society of control (Deleuze 178).

[3] Contrôl continu, literally translates to continuous control.

As Deleuze describes, "the various placements or sites of confinement through which individuals pass are independent variables: we're supposed to start all over again each time, and although all of these sites have a common language, it's analogical" (Deleuze 178). "The various forms of control," writes Deleuze, "are inseparable variations, forming a system of varying geometry whose language is digital[4]" (Deleuze 178). In other words, the "molds" and institutions (the family, the factory et cetera) are being eroded to make way for a system whose only ordering mechanism is susceptible to the fluidity of information and currency. This sentiment is evident when Deleuze writes, "in capitalism only one thing is universal, the market... there's no universal state, precisely because there's a universal market of which states are the centers, the trading floors" (Deleuze 172). Within the boundaries of such a schizophrenic[5] state, any underlying moral compass is dictated and driven by whatever path offers the least amount of resistance to the accumulation of capital and other gains. Under this model, it becomes evident that, today, the market has more control over foreign policy; distinctions between right and wrong, friend and foe, than any formal government body or state. In practical terms, "accountability" becomes a floating term that is separate from any real sense of consequence (Deleuze 180). We are surrounded by ciphers and figureheads, which can be

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[4] Deleuze is writing about the role of the worker within late 20th century capitalism. Rather than men being forced to fit within certain molds and roles, he regarded the new worker as a changeling. As Deleuze writes, "controls are a *modulation*, like a self-transmuting molding continually changing from one moment to the next" (Deleuze 197).

[5] Here I am referring to the opposing natures of seemingly all capitalist states. The pull between the need for sovereignty and identity and need to flow within global capital markets

disposed of or substituted in, at a moment's notice – "dividuals" rather than "individuals".

This reality is made especially evident within the televised news discourse. Within the televised news, reporters and anchors are disposed of with as little as a single line of dialogue. As the viewer, we are constantly being asked to stay tuned and shift our attention to the next talking head. So long as his position in front of the screen falls within the familiar lines and his mode and delivery are consistent with the voice that preceded it, the audience seems complacent to accept his credibility. The author and authority, here, become inverted – the news program or network itself becomes the sole authority figure. Those performing the act of reporting are simply following a pre-described format and style. As a result, it is becoming difficult to discuss the news in terms of confinement and propaganda. Individuality and ideology seem to be disappearing from the newsroom, and what we are left with is an unevenly dispersed cluster of networks. The consequences of this system are that notions of accountability and objectivity have been replaced by an ever present, all encompassing news aesthetic.

I will continue here by examining the ways in which the news has been transformed from an institution comprised of individuals and ideologies into a global network of control. Key to this idea is the notion that the news is being transformed from a monolithic whole into a network of control. The difference is that the news is no longer powered by individuals or ideologies, but rather by a boundless format or aesthetic. Here the news becomes powered by "ciphers"

and "actors" rather than by individuals or experts. By "cipher," I am referring to the complex computing language, based on a key or a predetermined set of rules, images or symbols. These ciphers can be inserted by programmers to execute a predetermined set of commands or rules. When the term is used to describe a person or group of persons, cipher denotes a person or thing of little value or importance: a non-person. According to Deleuze, the further into control society moves the harder it becomes to retain ones individuality (Deleuze 172). The reason behind this loss of individuality is due to the fact that the market demands it of us (Deleuze 179). The market no longer propagates itself based on institutions or confinement, but instead insists that we become autonomous, and fluid – like money.

In "The Television News Personality and Credibility," Margaret Morse stresses that "in order to function as a cohesive social force, the news must above all be worthy of belief" (Morse 56). Key to this is the presentation of the news anchor or reporter as an impartial mediator of the daily news. As Morse describes, in order to meet these new mandates, the press, radio and televised news broadcasts underwent drastic transformations that privileged distance and methodological objectivity above authorship (Morse 56). This meant that the news' credibility was no longer being derived from the expertise of the reporter or from the reputation of the particular news publication – news began to derive its credentials from the news itself (Morse 56). As Morse writes, at some point print, radio and television "developed a mode of narration, a style, and content which suppressed the subjective origin of the news 'story' in favour of a 'reality' which

seemed to possess a voice of its own" (Morse 56). Essentially, "an ideology of objectivity or impartiality transformed what were at one time reports from and for particular interest groups into 'objective reports' addressed to the general public and accepted as general knowledge" (Morse 56). What is important here is that this "transformation" was not simply undergone by a handful of newsmen. The historical shift from "subjective" journalism to "objective" journalism was undertaken by the entire news discourse (Mores 57). These new mandates pushed a different set of responsibilities onto the nightly news anchor. No longer an authority figure, the role of the evening news star became that of a mediator and go-between; from his desk the newsman directs our vision and dictates what news is important (Morse 57). The "shift" from subjective journalism to objective journalism was, in part, prompted by changes in technology. Today, it is easy to see how the expansion of telecommunications networks has replaced some of the authority and responsibility given to an anchor. Rather than having an anchor's description of a news story, we are shown the news event as it unfolds in real-time. But this too plays a role within the modern day televised news discourse. Today, reporters and anchors are accelerated through the ranks for how they look on camera as much as for their rigour and journalistic integrity. Instead of the vision of the trusted, cantankerous newsman we are left with an infinite number of interchangeable talking heads, whose only responsibility is to sit and face the camera.

This shift in authority changed the role of the news anchor. To put it bluntly, it is almost as if the anchor has been transformed from orator and

commentator, to a blank, anonymous interface through which information and news are channelled (Morse 60). Crucial to this new relationship, is the appearance of the anchor in front of the camera. While it may appear rudimentary, the gaze of the televised news personality plays a crucial role in establishing his credibility. The anchor addresses the audience at a personal level (Morse 60). He appears at the center of the camera's frame and speaks directly through the lens, and into the audience's homes. Through the magic of television, what the news anchor "recreates on the impersonal television screen is the first order of social reality, the face-to-face situation" (Morse 60). As Morse explains, the recreation of the "face-to-face" relationship between the news anchor and audience "seems more real than objective news stories," and thus reinforces the authority of the network (Morse 61). What is created is a false interaction between viewer and anchor – one that serves to maintain the illusion of the news as a personal and subjective experience.

Morse's sentiments are echoed by author, John Hartley. In "Home help for populist politics," Hartley describes the importance of eye contact in a televised news broadcast. "Television news," writes Hartley, "exploits one of the most distinctive features of the TV in general, namely the representation of people, and in particular of people's faces, expressive features and eyes, in the process of narration" (Hartley 76). But what separates the televised news broadcast from other media is the anchor's posture in front of the camera. Where other actors appear unaware of the camera, feigning as if there was no distinction between television and their lived experience, the news anchor addresses the

camera/viewer directly. "Thus," writes Hartley, "without verbalizing it, television news operates on a first person (I) to second person (you) axis, in the form of the newsreader's relation to the viewer via direct address and eye-contact" (Hartley 76). This mode of address establishes a complex relationship between the reporter (narrator), the viewer (audience) and the subject of the particular story. From this position the anchor or reporter has the power to cast the subject as either "we" or "they" (Hartley 77). The news anchor then has the power to frame the subject as either part of the whole, "we," and thus worthy of sympathy and support, or they are made outcast - a potential threat to the status quo. The news anchor can accomplish this without verbal intrusion. As Hartley describes, "eye-contact alone establishes an I/you axis between newsreader and viewer, without, apparently, any unwanted editorializing intervention" (Hartley 77). This is to say, despite the news' best effort to remain impartial; the news anchor is an active participant in the politics of sensemaking.

The real trick, however, is not the fact that the news anchor is positioned in a "face-to-face" relationship, but in the illusion of the "face-to-face" conversation. The conversation between news anchor and audience member is always a one-way flow of information. As Morse explains, "there is no actual feedback, and no recognition of the immediate experience or concerns of the viewer – reciprocity is impossible" (Morse 61). The news anchor is therefore always presented as an authority figure speaking down to the audience. This phenomenon is also aided by the carefully constructed and discursively unified style of speech that is rehearsed by the news anchor.

As explained by Morse, the news anchor addresses the camera in a "heightened 'news voice'" which "clouds the distinction between the newscaster in his official role as reporter and the newscaster as a person who speaks the news" (Morse 62). The end result is that the "newscaster seems to 'know' the news in the sense of personal knowledge" (Morse 62). This is, of course, impossible. The news is read and rehearsed from a teleprompter in the same way that actors are fed lines for sitcoms, or when delivering monologues on a late night television program. What we are left with is a system in which the news anchor speaks and appears informed; all the while the teleprompter remains invisible. In such a scenario the true driving force behind the evening newscast is the teleprompter. All the machine is lacking is a charismatic and attractive persona through which to deliver the news. Similarly, the drudge can be replaced but the teleprompter can not. Without the teleprompter the news anchor becomes powerless – speechless. Ultimately this begs the question of who, or what, is really the anchor that keeps the news from going astray – is it the anchor himself or the technology that empowers him?

Not unlike the heightened news voice of the evening news star, the aesthetic construction of the newsroom plays an important role in maintaining the legitimacy of the news. Each item that appears in front of the camera has been carefully positioned to convey information relative to a specific narrative, and to relate a coherency between the aural, textual and the visual elements of a news story. Ultimately, the convergence between these elements functions to discourage objection and disagreement by the audience by making them appear

more real than real (Morse 70). As Morse writes, the images, video segues, voiceovers, and "hanging box inserts" which appear over the anchor's left or right shoulder are "positioned like a thought balloon in the comics and appears in conjunction with his narration like a visual realization of his thoughts" (Morse 70). Often times, the textual and symbolic components of a newscast will mirror the speech of the news anchor, verbatim. While this may seem redundant, the repetition of information across multiple orders acts as simultaneous reinforcement of the newscaster's authority as an expert.

The end result is that any remaining subjectivity on the part of the anchor is suppressed through this spectacular convergence of sight and sound. Information is no longer presented by a lone voice, but is instead the end product of an entire news team. It becomes generally accepted that the aesthetic tropes of the newsroom could not be possible without the efforts of a variety of behind-the-scene actors. The invisible teleprompter, the unseen scriptwriter, the camera operator, the television director, the animation supervisor et cetera, are all made visible, in one form or another, through the immaculate presentation of a national broadcast. As Joyce Nelson writes, the news "like no other TV genre brings together such a range of technological competence… The network news show is essentially a showcase for the latest in electronics hardware and a celebration of television itself" (Nelson 98). This makes the news' claim to objectivity that much easier to digest, because the role of the subjective anchor is reduced to that of a "drudge" – a mere "enunciator" of the nightly news. Here again, what becomes essential to the success of the nightly news is not the people involved in its

production but its construction and the speed of the technology that makes it all possible.

Through the magic of television the evening news star transforms what were once regarded as reports from and for specific interests groups into general knowledge (Morse 56). The events depicted by the nightly news are not necessarily perceived as one of many possible accounts of what happened, but simply as an unfiltered window into the event. Within the news discourse, the camera lens has come to replace our collective vision of world events, and the news anchor himself has been charged with conveying, not interpreting, reality to us. As Morse reminds us, what we have witnessed is the breakdown of the news as an institution comprised of opinions and persons. Today, it seems that the "news" has become a universal package, an aesthetic, which can be copied, mimicked, and inserted anywhere in the world. It is in this way that the news has been broken down as a site of confinement only to be built up again as a network of control.

Gate Keeping – The Media as intellectual contraceptive.

Within contemporary society, maintaining a cohesive front is an insuperable aspect of control. As the US Administration is well aware, if there is dissent or dissonance from within their ranks, maintaining hegemonic control becomes nearly impossible. This is especially true during times of war. Over the past fifty years, the perception of war and the perception of world events have proven to be the deciding factor in whether or not the military will be successful

overseas. To paraphrase Louw, if nothing else, following Vietnam, the US military learned that if it could not win the hearts and minds of the American public it could not hope to win overseas (Louw 175). It seems that wars are won and lost on the nightly news. Unless the reports being sent home from the front coincide with the rhetoric being espoused by the Administration, the news becomes the site for social dissonance and disruption. As Louw writes, "television images have the capacity to promote an anti-war consciousness and to disrupt the legitimacy of using coercion" (Louw 175). "Furthermore," continues Louw, "if a war was not carefully Public Relation-ized, television images of the war have the capacity to seriously destabilize the legitimacy of hegemonic orders" (Louw 175). This control is not usually achieved through direct coercion or firings, but is instead controlled at the administrative, functional and practical levels of the news discourse. Through constant observance of these three areas, control and dominance are maintained by creating a series of interchangeable and interlocking gatekeepers at nearly every level of news production. In this section I hope to dismantle the assumption that the news is an objective communication form; I will show how the many built-in complexities and the bureaucratization of the newsroom have enabled external forces to exert direct control over what appears on the news and how information within the news is framed.

Even before you enter the newsroom and begin to deal with the red tape and editorial pressures that exist within, there are several societal gatekeepers in place to ensure that the status quo of the news is upheld. First and foremost the news is a business. Like any cultural product within capitalist society, the news is

about making money and ensuring that the conditions that allowed them to make money today exist in the future. Thus, there are certain material constraints imposed on newsmen before they even begin to cover an event. This issue was touched on by author, Robert Jensen, in his essay, "The Sport of Business/the Business of Sport." In his essay, Jensen addresses the conservative claim that the American news media are anti-business. For Jensen, this is an "odd claim, given that the news media are themselves corporations" (Jensen 29). This argument, according to Jensen, has more to do with political rhetoric and grandstanding than facts because it fails to explain "why the people who own the American media would hire and promote employees who have dedicated themselves to the destruction of the system that enriches them" (Jensen 29). The presence of leftwing viewpoints within the newsroom seems to have more to do with creating and maintaining the illusion of unbiased and fair reporting.

To illustrate his point, Jensen draws a comparison between sports analysts and business journalists. Sports journalists, according to Jensen, can be "among the most vicious in a newsroom, relentlessly going after their targets – including the rich and powerful – with venom and glee" (Jensen 30). They hold nothing back as they lay waste to the reputation and abilities of various sport professionals, and yet, no one would claim that a sports journalist was anti-sport. The men and women who cover the sports section love sport. They have dedicated the entirety of their professional lives to the coverage and enrichment of the discourse. And yet, if a business reporter were to exercise the same level of journalistic freedom they would be labelled a communist. It is a strange and

hypocritical double standard that has left the news discourse fractured and dishonest. Rather than "challenging corporate power" and the inherently "antidemocratic" nature of corporations, journalists are left impotent (Jensen 33). But the pressures to make money and abide by the fundamental rules, which govern capitalist society are only the tip of the iceberg. Once inside the newsroom, a whole new set of ideological confinements are placed on journalists and newsmen alike. All of which serve to limit dissent and ensure that the mechanisms of their reproduction remain intact. Confinement is perhaps not the best word to describe what goes on inside of a newsroom. It is true that there is a strict set of criteria that a journalist or reporter must adhere to, but these criteria have been put into place to un-restrict newsmen, not hinder them. The style of journalistic writing that has been carefully developed over the past forty years ensures that there are as few impediments placed on journalists as possible. In this way, news reporting has become streamlined to ensure that the most content can be produced in the least amount of time.

Inside the newsroom (whether in the context of a newspaper or television studio), however, there is a completely different set of constraints being opposed on the kinds of reporting that gets done. According to Louw, "newsrooms, as sub-structures within larger organizations, necessarily conform to the practices of their host bodies" (Louw 156). This is not to say that the pressure imposed on the newsroom emanates from direct coercive force (from a manager, editor or owner), or from a broader conspiracy (the government, or other external power). Rather, the newsroom, and the practice of newsmaking, is influenced in more

indirect and insidious manners. As Louw discusses, a key "decision in meaning-making sites is choosing who gets promoted to those positions where staffing decision are made... Ultimately, decision in meaning-making over staffing is perhaps the core mechanism for moving meaning-making in a preferred direction" (Louw 156). The belief here is that newsroom staffing decisions ultimately determine which subjects are promoted and which are shunned by a news publication. By hiring like-minded individuals, an owner or editor of a particular newspaper/station can ensure that their agenda prevails. This level of control exists on nearly every tier of the hiring process - board members and owners appoint CEOs, who in turn are responsible for hiring managers, editors et cetera. This hiring/firing cycle trickles all the way down the line of a news-making organization and ensures that a standard of control is maintained year after year.

Further control is exerted within the newsroom in the form of routinization and formatting. As I discussed in the previous section, sustaining a cohesive format and aesthetic solidifies a network's legitimacy by helping to suspend the audience's disbelief. But, in addition to a heightened position of authority, formatting information into specific norms and modes of transmission ensures a degree of power over what stories are covered and how they are told. Creating news involves sorting through a world's worth of information and phenomena, before deciding what is important enough to make it into print. As Louw writes, "effectively, journalists are gatekeepers, allowing some information through the gate, but blocking other information" (Louw 159). Ultimately, however, the

decision-making process has less to do with individual reporters and more to do with institutional standards and formats.

Because of the routinization of the newsroom, the decision over which stories to print and which stories to shun is ultimately managed at the unconscious level. This discourse of self-censorship manifests itself on two planes: the mythological level, and the methodological level. The mythological dimension of news routinization tracks its origins to the very foundations of the news industry. Going back to the totemic belief that the news provides an uncompromised "window to the world" – this seemingly benign, self-justifying piece of rhetoric is, itself, situated within a White-Anglo discourse. Thus, the "window-to-the-world" model of newsmaking ensures that all stories are told from within a western perspective of 'newsworthiness' (Louw 159). The danger herein is the extent to which this model has been adopted and naturalized across the globe. The Anglo frame for newsmaking has been implemented into training programs that are taught in journalism schools throughout the world (Louw 160). Despite minor regional mutations, a remarkably similar news-frame exists spanning across social, economic, national and geographical boundaries (Louw 161). And so, the Anglo-eye for "newsworthiness" has become the global standard through which the vast majority of news stories are covered.

Although closely related to the mythological bias present within the news, the methodological confinement of the news manifests itself in very particular ways. Once a story's "newsworthiness" has been evaluated by a reporter, his methodological choices determine what aspects of the event are important

enough to make it into print. As Louw describes, "a process of selection, emphasis and de-emphasis" has been routinized around the WWWWWH-formula ("who" does "what" and "when," "where," "why" and "how" they do it) (Louw 160). To paraphrase Louw, the WWWWWH-formula is well suited for cause-and-effect style news stories (such as motor accidents, fires, and minor crimes), but the formula quickly becomes a great hindrance when trying to cover stories of a more complex nature (such as the reasons for engaging in war, torture et cetera) (Louw 161). What the WWWWWH-formula does do, is create a safe-haven for journalists to stand behind so that they appear objective – "in essence, because hard, concrete facts are privileged, the stories acquire a 'tangibility' and so appear factual' rather than 'constructed'" (Louw 161). The methodological pressure to relate all news events to the WWWWWH format is immense. So much so that, even those stories which exceed the boundaries of the WWWWWH format's comprehension are made to fit within this mould. Events such as Haditha and Abu Ghraib, and other stories like them, are institutionally stripped of their complexities and made to fit within the hard news format of storytelling. What we are usually left with is a dulled down, over-simplified account of potentially world-shaping events.

The Anglo-cizing of global news and the routinization of the news format ensures that a certain standard of reporting is carried over throughout the entire news discourse. But even beyond quality control, the structure of the news guarantees that each story is written as efficiently and objectively as possible. Within the newsroom objectivity can mean two very different things. On one

hand, objectivity is the marker of journalistic integrity. Objectivity denotes journalistic rigour and a high attention to relating both sides of any story. On the other hand, objectivity can also denote the absence of the subject. In this way reporters are further alienated from their work. In an ideal scenario, the only voice present within a news story would be that of a dividuated, almost machine like, universal journalist. In this way the mark of a good journalist lies not in their ability to speak passionately about any given story but instead in their ability to put aside their individuality and speak objectively. One of the consequences of this kind of objective journalism is that newsmen and women often feel no attachment to any given story and thus have few incentives to pursue a story beyond WWWWWH format.

It is easy to see the effect that this degree of restriction would have on how news is covered. If news stories like Haditha and Abu Ghraib are being watered down in order to fit within an outdated narrative format, the issues that underlay them are being left out of popular discourse. Abu Ghraib, for example, was reduced to a story about individual actions and misdeeds. This repressive format did not allow for the larger, systemic problems, which were arguably the cause of the scandal, to see the light of day. This is problematic because, in reducing far-reaching stories to the bare-bones essence of the event, responsibility is shifted away from the broader socio-political landscape and placed solely on individual actors. For example, through the mechanisms of the news industry, Lynndie England becomes solely responsible for one of the most

damaging news stories to come out of Iraq.

No Selling Point

The news is no longer best understood as a site of confinement. Rather, its modes of operation and structures have been put in order to create a system of constant, perpetual movement. It is true that the news is inherently political, but the politics that dictate the news' "agenda" has less to do with hegemony or nationalism, and more to do with the political economy of capitalism. Therefore, any intersection between the news and politics is best understood in terms of a coincidence, or as a treaty of convenience, between two forces with similar goals. The spotlight on Abu Ghraib was damning to the US Administration, true, but in the long run news of the story did little to interrupt the status quo or disrupt the flow of global capital. What we are left with then is a series of sensational photographs that succeeded in selling newspapers and increasing ratings for the broadcast news networks. The absence of coverage of the Haditha Civilian Massacre is perhaps best understood in terms of its saleability. All of the photographs from Haditha were buried in red tape and legality. The few photographs to make it to print regarding Haditha were aerial photographs of the surrounding area – there was no blood, guts or gore to grab viewers. In other words, Haditha was a story without a selling point.

Chapter 2: News in the Age of Empire

Introduction

In this chapter I will outline and develop my claim that the news is better understood from a Deleuzian post-modernist, empirical capitalist model, than it is from a Chomskian, propaganda model by focusing more closely on the function of war in contemporary society. I aim to show that war is no longer best understood as a conflict between two sovereign nations, but is better understood as a series of skirmishes waged against invisible combatants and "floating" enemies. Because war has changed, so too has the commercial news media and the coverage of war. In this way, the news is transformed from a simple tool of propaganda by one nation or another, into a much larger symptom of global empire. It soon becomes apparent that the forces controlling the newsroom have little to do with government officials, military higher-ups or men in grey flannel suits. Rather, it seems that the world's market sets the agendas inside of the newsroom.

To begin I will examine the work of Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri. In *Empire* Hardt and Negri argue that sovereignty, as it was once understood, has been re-imagined in the wake of global network capitalism. This re-imagining has brought about a shift in global power and has thus changed war as it was once understood. As I will argue, this shift has also fundamentally changed the role that the mainstream news media play in contemporary society. In the following section I will give an overview of the concept of "national heritage" and demonstrate how news stories such as the Abu Ghraib Prison Scandal can

interrupt official rhetorics and impact on concepts of heritage at the individual level. This makes managing and Public Relation-izing coverage of such events all the more important to world leaders. Finally, I will present a case for tactics in dealing with and moving beyond atrocity. Here I will argue that the US news media played an important role in maintaining and Public Relation-zing both scandals in an attempt to limit dissent and public dissonance. In this section I will draw connections between how news of the scandals was worked and reworked at both ends of the media spectrum to ensure that the status quo in America was maintained, once again ensuring that the flow of global capital was left intact.

War in the Age of Empire

In *Empire*, Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri argue that our concept of national sovereignty has been replaced by economics and the principles of free exchange (Hardt and Negri xi). As Hardt and Negri write, "over the past several decades, as colonial regimes were overthrown and then precipitously after the Soviet barriers to the capitalist world market finally collapsed, we have witnessed an irresistible and irreversible globalization of economic and cultural exchanges" (Hardt and Negri xi). To paraphrase Hardt and Negri, the ease through which goods, technologies and the sites of production travel across international boundaries has weakened an individual nation's ability to regulate the flows of capital within its own borders (Hardt and Negri xi). But this does not mean that sovereignty itself has declined, rather, it seems as though "sovereignty has taken

a new form, composed of a series of national and supranational organisms united under a single logic of rule: Empire" (Hardt and Negri xii). Just as in Deleuze's society of control, under Empire the only thing universal is the market.

One of the consequences of Empire is the naturalization and routinization of war. Today, war is often symptomatic of one nation's perception of sovereignty standing in the way of the flow of global capital. According to Hardt and Negri, here we have "renewed interest in the concept of *bellum justum,* or 'just war'" (Hardt and Negri 12). As Hardt and Negri write, the concept of a just war has "begun to reappear recently as a central narrative of political discussions, particularly in the wake of the first Gulf War" (Hardt and Negri 12). No doubt the notion of just war was reinvigorated following the events of September the 11th. "The traditional concept of just war," according to Hardt and Negri, "involves the banalization of war and the celebration of it as an ethical instrument" (Hardt and Negri 12). War is then perceived as a necessary auxiliary to peace while the amorphous enemy is transformed into a perpetual threat that must be beaten back at any cost.

What is interesting about just wars is that they often have no end in sight. As Hardt and Negri describe in their follow up to *Empire*, *Multitude*, there is increasingly little difference between outside and inside, between foreign conflicts and homeland security" (Hardt and Negri 14). Hardt and Negri continue, adding, "We have thus proceeded from metaphorical and rhetorical invocations of war to real wars against indefinite, immaterial enemies" (Hardt and Negri 14). Wars such as the "war on drugs" and the "war on terror" are without a definite,

definable enemy and as such can be employed rhetorically by various groups within society. Such wars can be extended across the globe, continuing for years, decades or even generations (Hardt and Negri 14).

The political advantages of waging just wars are innumerable. The war on terrorism, for example, has been employed by numerous Administrations around the world to justify all matters of selfish and authoritarian ends. Racial profiling within global security systems is now regarded as a necessary evil for keeping our malls, streets and airlines safe, suspected terrorists can now be held in custody indefinitely without trial or charge, and asymmetrical warfare, to use Hardt and Negri's term, is acceptable so long as it is deployed against the enemies of freedom (Hardt 51).

One could challenge Hardt and Negri's ideas by simplifying America's war on terror to a conflict of ideologies between Christians and Muslims. The concept of global Empire rears its head once again when you consider how much money is up for grabs in Iraq. In "Baghdad year zero: Pillaging Iraq in pursuit of a neocon utopia" Naomi Klein sheds light on what she maintains is America's true interest in Iraq. As Klein recounts:

> It was only after I had been in Baghdad for a month that I found what I was looking for. I had traveled to Iraq a year after the war began, at the height of what should have been a construction boom, but after weeks of searching I had not seen a single piece of heavy machinery apart from tanks and humvees. Then I saw it: a construction crane. It was big and yellow and impressive, and when I caught a glimpse of it around a corner in a busy

> shopping district I thought that I was finally about to witness some of the reconstruction I had heard so much about. But as I got closer I noticed that the crane was not actually rebuilding anything—not one of the bombed-out government buildings that still lay in rubble all over the city, nor one of the many power lines that remained in twisted heaps even as the heat of summer was starting to bear down. No, the crane was hoisting a giant billboard to the top of a three-story building. SUNBULAH: HONEY 100% NATURAL, made in Saudi Arabia. (Klein, 2004)

According to Klein, Bush's postwar plan for Iraq was not as ill thought out as political rivals would have us believe. It seems that Bush's true intentions for Iraq were to "lay out as much honey as possible, then sit back and wait for the flies" (Klein 2004). To paraphrase Klein, Iraq was to become the world's first economic utopia - "Every policy that liberates multinational corporations to pursue their quest for profit would be put into place: a shrunken state, a flexible workforce, open borders, minimal taxes, no tariffs, no ownership restrictions... the people of Iraq would, of course, have to endure some short-term pain" (Klein 2004). Jobs would be lost, state assets would be seized and redistributed, the means of nearly every aspect of production would become stripped away and sold to an international highest bidder and local business and farmers would perish in the wake of global exchange (Klein 2004). "But to the authors of this plan," as Klein writes, "these would be small prices to pay for the economic boom that would surely explode once the proper conditions were in place, a boom so powerful the country would practically rebuild itself" (Klein 2004). We are thus

given a glimpse into the state of modern war. War is no longer the product of right versus wrong, a battle between incompatible ideologies or the result of aggression between sovereign states - rather it seems that war has been transformed into a means to an end.

The mainstream news media then play a crucial role in facilitating this end by maintaining the rhetoric and façade of 'just' warfare. Without the constant spin and Public Relation-izing of messages being sent home from the front and at home the system would collapse. It is not surprising then that stories such as Abu Ghraib and the Haditha civilian massacre were met with such controversy. News of Abu Ghraib and the Haditha Civilian massacre fundamentally altered the story of America's war in Iraq. Troop causalities and increasing war-debt aside, when the Abu Ghraib story first broke it undermined America's claim to a just war. America could no longer take the moral high ground in the war on terror as it seemed that America was equally capable of committing atrocity. To an organization based on creating Klein's neo-con-utopia, such an obstacle was unacceptable. Thus, strategies of negation were put in place to ensure that the damage from Abu Ghraib and Haditha were as minimal as possible. In the following section I will present an overview of strategies for coping with and dealing with national atrocity, and demonstrate how stories such as Abu Ghraib and Haditha can threaten a nation's war effort under the regime of capitalist empire.

An overview of Atrocity

'Dealing' with the atrocities at Haditha and Abu Ghraib presented an interesting set of problems for both journalists and the American general public. In fact, dealing with the tragedies in any way other than denial was regarded as detrimental to America's war effort, and unpatriotic. For example, pleas from human rights organizations for full disclosure have been seen as obtrusive and unnecessary, while whistle blowers of the tragedies have been treated as traitors and terrorist sympathizers (Anderson and Morgan 2007). I believe that this is the directly related to the fact that these images, and others like them, interrupt and promote a contrasting image between the "America" that is presented in the popular taught histories, and between what is being presented on the news. In this way, news of both Abu Ghraib and Haditha interrupts the constructed heritage of America. In doing so I hope to demonstrate that heritage is an experienced, lived through and discursive force within the western world; one that is both constructed on the federal and grassroots level. I hope to better understand the impact that Abu Ghraib had on the American conscience, and offer an explanation as to why Haditha was kept out of circulation.

Heritage, according to Alan Gordon, is "what is meaningful in our history" (Gordon 508). It is a construction - a "happy history" that "passes on myths of origins and continuation, endowing groups with a sense of purpose" (Gordon 509). In *Dissonant Heritage: the Management of the Past as a Resource in Conflict*, J.E. Tunbridge and G.J. Ashworth broaden this definition to include people's objects d'art and other historical sites including museums, monuments

and memorials. But in addition to these sites we also have the concept of heritage as being a kind of group, or shared memory. As Tunbridge and Ashworth describe, heritage begins to take shape as a form of everyday life – people's identities and behaviour can be shaped by their perceptions of what their individual heritage may be (Tunbridge and Ashworth 1). Heritage can therefore bestow a sense of pride and nationalism, and can even be used to justify actions that would otherwise seem counterintuitive.

The distinction between history and heritage is an important aspect when defining heritage. As Tunbridge and Ashworth describe, "history assumes the existence of episodes from the past in much the way as geography assumes the existence of places that can be described, however imperfectly, as really existing even if not directly experienced by the narrator" (Tunbridge and Ashworth 6). History then attempts to show us how the past really was. Heritage, on the other hand, presents the past in a much less refined manner (Tunbridge and Ashworth 6). Heritage gives us an essentialist vision of the past in order to shape our collective eye; it borrows from different historical events to create a nostalgic, and often falsely positive depiction of past events (Tunbridge and Ashworth 6). Heritage is then, history as it was meant to be; or rather, history as it was meant to be remembered.

The concept of heritage, particularly in postcolonial societies such as Canada, America and Great Britain, is inherently controversial in that it attempts to create an image of the present on the back of a clouded and inaccurate representation of the past (Tunbridge and Ashworth 6). In doing so, certain

groups are inevitably left off a nation's heritage map. Britain's Afro-Caribbean and Indian populations, for example, have a long history within Britain; they have contributed innumerable objects d'art within Britain's cultural production sites, and yet are still virtually invisible within Britain's popular heritage sites. Similarly, Canada has had difficulty negotiating certain aspects of its Aboriginal people's histories into its popular heritage sites. The legacy of segregation, exclusion and attempts at assimilation left by white Canada has made confronting aspects of Canada's past difficult to incorporate into its multiculturalist, social imaginary. Such realties can create fissures and incongruities within a group's sense of collective identity, and confronting these discrepancies can lead to what Tunbridge and Ashworth describe as "heritage dissonance."

Heritage dissonance occurs when aspects of a group's past contradict the social imaginary maintained by said group's heritage (Tunbridge and Ashworth 20). In their examination, Tunbridge and Ashworth envision our sense of heritage and its link to identity as a kind of musical equilibrium (Tunbridge and Ashworth 20). To better explain this analogy, Tunbridge and Ashworth ask us to imagine heritage as a sustained harmony, which envelops the whole of society (Tunbridge and Ashworth 20). Dissident aspects from the past, or negative realities that may emerge in the news or in our everyday lived experiences, function to disrupt this harmony by creating contrasting notes, gaps and pitches. If left unchecked, these discrepancies can create "cognitive dissonance" (Tunbridge and Ashworth 20). And so, the role of heritage is to maintain this harmony – "its management also implies that 'steps will be taken in the direction

of increased congruity with the existing frame of reference'" (Tunbridge and Ashworth 20). According to Tunbridge and Ashworth, even on the smallest level, we can postulate an "individual's reaction to levels of heritage dissonance by behaviour designed to return to an acceptable level of incongruity" (Tunbridge and Ashworth 20). Under this model, people are actively involved in negating aspects of reality in order to maintain a coherent construction of both their heritage and identity. Strategies of negation are paramount during times of war, especially when one's own nation is actively involved in what Hardt and Negri referred to as "asymmetrical warfare" (Hardt and Negri 51). The parallels between heritage and propaganda are astounding. From Tunbridge and Ashworth's description, the maintenance of a harmonious vision of heritage, like control, requires constant maintenance, editing, and a prolonged expression of suspended disbelief. Through this definition, heritage appears as more a form of overt social control than it does a people, a history, or a sense of national pride. It is no wonder the stakes involved in maintaining such harmony are so high.

The Management of Heritage in the Face of Past and Present Atrocity

The need to manage dissonant aspects of a state or social group's past can result in some very distinct coping mechanisms. As Tunbridge and Ashworth describe, in negotiating past atrocities, "the reactions of those who suffered and those who were to blame, together with the rest of humanity who might under different circumstances have fallen into either category, are complex" (Tunbridge and Ashworth 95). "Furthermore," continue Tunbridge and Ashworth, "highly

charged controversy with respect to the identity of both victims and perpetrators creates a heritage dissonance problem without parallel and any attempt to resolve it can have profoundly unsettling... political consequences" (Tunbridge and Ashworth 95). As I alluded to earlier, the politics involved in legitimating asymmetrical warfare are astounding. Asymmetrical warfare occurs when one nation's resources and military might dwarf that of their enemies (Hardt and Negri 51). In such cases, the dominant or more advanced nation has to take special precautions to ensure that it is not regarded as an unlawful aggressor in both foreign and domestic affairs. The recognition of past atrocity can only further complicate the delicate balance between a just-war and genocide. As Tunbridge and Ashworth describe, "since it is better to perceive oneself a victim than a perpetrator it is unsurprising that the management of victimization may tend towards its inflation and that of perpetration its denial" (Tunbridge and Ashworth 108). One obvious group strategy for coping with this is "deliberate collective amnesia" – "the events are ignored in official taught histories and public commemoration and a popular consensus is encouraged that regards the events as too distant and too irrelevant to more pressing current concerns" (Tunbridge and Ashworth 108). In a case like Abu Ghraib, it was far better for the American conscience to move beyond the scandal, and to forget.

This tendency manifested itself in several different ways. Both official and unofficial actions taken by the US military to address the scandal involved punishing anyone who talked about the scandal, or who may have leaked information regarding the extent of the atrocities that had taken place in Abu

Ghraib. Joe Darby, for example, was the first person to leak the Abu Ghraib story to the press. Darby, who was stationed at the now infamous prison, wanted nothing but to send pictures of landscapes and other scenic images home to his wife and family. In order to find suitable pictures, Darby approached Charles Graner, a prison guard, who had gained the reputation as somewhat of a shutter-bug amongst his peers (Anderson and Morgan 2007). Graner unknowingly handed a disc containing both the shots Darby was looking for and the now infamous photos. In an interview with Anderson Cooper, Darby professed that he was shocked by what he saw, and quickly made copies of the discs (Anderson and Morgan 2007). Once the photos made it to the major news networks, Darby's life changed forever. Since releasing the photos, Darby has received several death threats from both soldiers and his neighbours. Soon after the scandal a vigil was held in Darby's hometown for the Soldiers from his unit, including the accused, but not, however, for Darby (Anderson and Morgan 2007). As Darby explains, "These were people who knew me since I was born… These were people who were my parents' friends, my grandparents' friends that turned against me" (Anderson and Morgan 2007). The backlash from his testimony forced Darby and his wife to move from their hometown, and made it necessary for them to be accompanied by an armed guard. Despite being awarded the "Profile of Courage" from Senator Ted Kennedy, and being commended by officials for speaking out against his peers, Darby, to a large extent, has been treated as a coward and a traitor by the nation.

The second piece of evidence we have for the United States attempting to implement systematic, collective amnesia, is in its legal responses to the photos, themselves. Before the scandal even hit the newsstands, attempts were made by the government to prevent the dissemination of the photos by blocking their publication and by making it illegal to publish any photos detailing evidence of American-lead torture (de Sola 2006). It was not until the American Civil Liberties Union filed a Freedom of Information Act lawsuit against the state department, that the full body of images were released into the public sphere. According to David de Sola, a reporter for CNN, the "lawsuit has resulted in the release of more than 90,000 pages of government documents on issues of detainee treatment in Iraq, Afghanistan, and at the US military prison in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba" (de Sola 2006). The court's decision was prompted because publication of the photographs was viewed as being "central to the purposes of [the Freedom of Information Act] because they initiate debate, not only about the improper and unlawful conduct of American soldiers, 'rogue' soldiers, as they have been characterized, but also about other important questions as well" (de Sola 2006). Even after Abu Ghraib became a household name, the United States military took every action possible to stop people from discussing the prison and to punish anyone that did.

As recently as August 2007, Lt. Col. Steven L. Jordon, a senior officer stationed in Abu Ghraib, was in the news. Lt. Col. Jordon was acquitted on charges of failing to control US soldiers who abused detainees at Abu Ghraib, but was found guilty of disobeying an order not to discuss the scandal during a

military run investigation. Although the circumstances for Lt. Col. Jordan's acquittal are open for appeal, the fact that he was found guilty for talking about Abu Ghraib is of special interest. Like Darby, Lt. Col. Jordon was attempting to right a wrong within the walls of Abu Ghraib and was subsequently punished for doing so.

After the scandal at Abu Ghraib became public knowledge, the Military's attention turned away from suppressing the story and onto scapegoating responsibility away from the broader socio-political, socio-cultural circumstances that undercut the scandal. As a result, the individual actors stationed at Abu Ghraib soon had their heads placed on the public's guillotine. As Tunbridge and Ashworth write, "if collective amnesia fails and complicity in past atrocity must be confronted there are two logically contradictory, management strategies possible" (Tunbridge and Ashworth 109). The first seeks to limit blame, by expanding the blanket of responsibility as wide as possible (Tunbridge and Ashworth 109). The idea herein is that if everyone is guilty then no one can be blamed. The danger with this strategy is that it offers little in the way of reparations. As Tunbridge and Ashworth describe, "if unseen and uncontrollable external forces can be invoked all individual morality can be reduced to automatic, and thus individually blameless, reactions" (Tunbridge and Ashworth 110). This strategy would not have sufficed for dealing with Abu Ghraib or Haditha because broadening the circle of blame for the atrocities was counter intuitive to the war story both the media and the Bush Administration were trying to spin. Furthermore, any attempt to dilute guilt would have only lead to further dissonance and further criticisms of

the Bush Administration; accepting blame would only exasperate the already taut politically environment.

The second defensive strategy for coping with atrocity is to attempt to limit the blame to one specific group, thereby exonerating the rest of society (Tunbridge and Ashworth 110). As Tunbridge and Ashworth describe, "this can be a highly successful strategy if such a guilty group can be found, fixed in the popular imagination and then distanced and disowned by present society" (Tunbridge and Ashworth 110). This is the strategy that is most evident in the management of Abu Ghraib. After the scandal from Abu Ghraib, both the Bush Administration and the mainstream media attempted to limit the guilt by isolating the soldiers stationed in Iraq as solely responsible for the crimes that were committed. Charles Graner, Lynndie England, Sabrina Harman and Lt. Col. Steven L. Jordan have been among the few names to be released following the scandal at Abu Ghraib. Despite reports by multiple panels and investigative committees, all of which have pointed to the fact that Abu Ghraib was the responsibility of both the soldiers stationed on the ground and of bureaucrats in Washington, only the soldiers have been publicly ostracized. James Schlesinger, for example, was appointed by former Secretary of Defence, Donald Rumsfeld, to head-up a four person advisory panel to investigate what went wrong in Abu Ghraib. Within Schlesinger's 126-page report he clearly identified that "there is institutional and personal responsibility right up the chain of command as far as Washington is concerned" (CNN.com, August 25, 2004). Schlesinger's sentiments were echoed by former Republican Representative and a panel

member who was once a senior member of the House Armed Services Committee, Tillie K. Fowler, who said, "We found fundamental failures throughout all levels of command, from the soldiers on the ground to Central Command and to the Pentagon" (CNN.com, August 25, 2004). "These failures of leadership," continues Fowler, "helped to set the conditions which allowed for the abusive practices to take place" (CNN.com, August 25, 2004). Despite these reports, the only official action taken to resolve the issues at Abu Ghraib was directed against soldiers like Lynndie England, Charles Graner, and the ten other defendants at the center of the scandal. Sgt. Michael J. Smith, for example, was found guilty of using a military dog to terrorize detainees at Iraq's Abu Ghraib prison. Sgt. Smith was sentenced to 179 days in prison, demoted to private, and had his salary reduced by $750 USD for three months, making his paycheck about $1523 USD per month (Courson 2006). Smith was charged with using his canine, Marco, to terrify prisoners – "allegedly for amusement and in competition with other soldiers" (Courson 2006). Although Smith's crimes were heinous, his sentencing does little to address the conditions that led to the scandal at Abu Ghraib.

In identifying a small contingent of soldiers that could be named, blamed, and held accountable for the entirety of the misdeeds at Abu Ghraib, the US government effectively situated the crimes at Abu Ghraib in the past. By limiting their quest for justice within the walls of Abu Ghraib, the Bush Administration effectively exonerated itself from any potential backlash. Furthermore, it enabled them to appear shocked at the goings-on, and misdeeds of their own soldiers, who were, after all, only following orders. As Tunbridge and Ashworth describe,

"the danger of demonization is of course that it fails to recognise the causes of specific atrocities, and more broadly dehumanization fails to acknowledge the human flaws that cause such events and thus makes their repetition more likely" (Tunbridge and Ashowrth 110). This is to say that by not dealing with the problem head on, people essentially doom themselves to relive past mistakes.

The news' treatment of the soldiers from Abu Ghraib coincided nearly perfectly with those of the military's internal investigations and legal actions. Within just a few short months of the Abu Ghraib's initial leak, the story was dropped from public circulation. Instead of being used as evidence of a war fought wrong, any and all publication of the now infamous photos was seen as being in poor taste or, even worse, treason. But, because of the cyclical cycle in which news and information traversed the American public sphere, it has become difficult to determine whether or not the news' response to Abu Ghraib was reflexive of broader American sentiments, or if it was responsible for shaping them. This begs the question of whether or not the suppression of the Haditha civilian massacre occurred because of the invested interests of the news elite, or whether or not it was the work of the collective unconscious of everyday America.

Populist Narratives within Elite Media

The correlation and simultaneity in response to the news of the Abu Ghraib Prison Scandal between the news elite and the general populace in America suggests that there is more to the news than being a hierarchical, top-down, propaganda machine. It is true that the news elite are able to maintain a

monopoly of vision over the general populace by deciding newsworthiness and agenda setting et cetera, but this does not necessarily mean that the evening news is totally separate from the general population. Rather, it seems that the news, however monolithic it may appear, is susceptible to the same fears and desires as are the people who make, report, sponsor and watch the evening news. I believe that this is precisely due to the fact that the news is run by the same fears and anxieties that affect everybody: financial fears, fear of job loss et cetera. Global capitalist empire has saturated nearly every facet of day to day life. This saturation has become so total that the lines between commerce and the free market are now virtually indistinguishable from daily life and thus bleed into people's personal lives, opinions and experiences.

Cases such as the persecution of whistle-blowers at both the organization and grass roots level suggest that there is more at play here than stringent hegemonic dominance of the media elite over the general population. Instead, it seems as though the whole of the American experience has been conditioned to forget and move beyond tragedy. It seems as though the quintessential motivation for unpacking the tragedies were to manage and create discourse about them only in the most superficial of ways. The end results are two sensational news stories, presented as if they were happening somewhere else, outside of America. The men and women at the center of the controversy were not representative of America's armed forces, nor the general population, but were instead "just a couple bad apples" within the otherwise unblemished bushel.

Chapter 3: Trojans and Wrenches

Trojans and Wrenches

As we move deeper and deeper into control, access to resistance seems to become increasingly convoluted. The tools of resistance that are available to the individual are becoming more engrained within the system they are attempting to subvert. We have seen this before – tactics of resistance almost involve the re-authoring of various cultural products and texts (de Certeau 30). But never before have the tactics of resistance so closely resembled those of the dominant order. According to Deleuze, the weapons of resistance have always changed to fit within their era (Deleuze 175). Day by day, as we move towards control we are slowly seeing new forms of resistance emerge. "It's true that, even before control societies are fully in place," writes Deleuze, "forms of delinquency or resistance are also appearing" (Deleuze 175). "Computer Piracy and viruses," notes Deleuze, "will replace strikes and what the nineteenth century called 'sabotage'" (Deleuze 175). This is to say that Trojans and malware will become the wrenches and bricks of the 21st Century.

At the same time we are witnessing the emergence of a new trend that has never before been available. Just as corporations have seized power by becoming rhizomatic[6], so too have resistance groups. The Internet has provided minority voices with a fabulous new tool to compete with those of the majority. Blogs, eZines, global petitions and piracy are proving to be some of the most effective weapons for disrupting the new global order. For the first time,

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[6] Deleuze and Guattari use the term rhizomatic to describe spaces, structures and theories which have multiple points of entry and exit. Within a rhizomatic structure power is dispersed horizontally rather than vertically, allowing multiple users or players to exert control or dominance simultaneously.

messages that seep through the cracks of the mainstream media have a platform to stand on and be reborn within the subordinate classes.

In this chapter I will give an overview of some of the circumstances that have dotted the media's emergence within the society of control. Starting with deregulation, I will move through the amalgamation between the military, the news and cultural production before finally settling on moments of triumph by global minorities.

Deregulating the World

During the Thatcher/Reagan era, conglomeration between the world's largest media empires began (Louw 91). As Eric Louw describes, both "Thatcherism and Reaganism promoted a winding back of Keynesian state interventionism and a return to laissez-faire market regulation" (Louw 91). The belief herein was that the market-driven, commercialization of the public sphere could only promote "choice" and "consumer sovereignty" over media content (Louw 91). According to Louw, "the argument was that media operating according to commercial principles were compelled to deliver the products demanded by audiences, or face bankruptcy" (Louw 91). But this view was hardly universally agreed upon. Arguments from the left contended that such a shift would only serve to further alienate the public from cultural production sites, and that a turn to commercialization would limit access to social minorities and other marginalized groups (Louw 92). Instead of aiding the public sphere, the commercialization of media centers could only limit debate and participation.

The concept of the "public sphere" was first introduced by Jurgen Habermas. According to Habermas, the "public sphere is a sphere which mediates between society and state, in which the public organizes itself as the bearer of public opinion, accords with the principle of the public sphere – that principle of public information which once had to be fought for against the arcane policies of monarchies and which since that time has made possible the democratic control of state activities" (Habermas 50). In his writings, Habermas is nostalgic for the German/French press in which, "the bourgeoisie/burgers used the new Gutenberg-inspired media to further their interests and mobilize against the then ruling feudal elite" (Louw 93). The result of this alliance was a print-mediated public sphere that stretched from Germany to France, and finally to England – this served to produce a relatively dense network of public communication, which, according to Habermas, eventually manifested itself into a counter-hegemonic force (Habermas 423). Today, Habermas' public sphere is little more than a dream. Despite the fluidity and speed with which information is capable of traveling, and despite the vast networks and infrastructure for creating and distributing new media content that are readily available, Habermas' dream of a space for the democratic exchange of ideas and information appears squashed beneath the monolithic power of the laissez-faire, capitalist-driven media giants.

In the previous chapters we have discussed what can essentially be referred to as the fundamental problems and assumptions underlying the mainstream news media. Particularly in the case of the televised news media,

the problem with the news is that it reflects the interests of a select few, all the while carrying the banner of being a clear, objective, and unbiased account of world events. As I demonstrated in chapter one, this claim, and others like them, is fallacious. Like all other capitalist-driven organizations, the news is primarily driven by profit and is therefore subject to the same kind of interference and ideological dominance as any other business (Louw 7). As a result, the populist vision of a cantankerous old news hound, relentlessly chasing a news story becomes further and further removed from reality. Today, it seems that the newsroom is organized around sensationalism and ratings, rather than journalistic integrity or ethics. Alas, this reality seems far more total when you consider the effects that conglomeration and concentration have had on the world's mediascapes. As I touched on in chapter one, mergers between the media-rich have only consolidated control over every idea and product that is circulated within the mass forum.

Before I go too far I feel that it is prudent to give some grounds to some of the obstacles that the alterative press faces. It is not simply a matter of taking action or even lobbying for more open-ended, democratic access within the mainstream media. Since the Thatcher/Reagan era, the idea of participation and regulation has, itself, become a counter-hegemonic movement. As discussed in chapter one, the merger between RCA and GE ensured that the US military would have a controlling interest in one of America's largest broadcasters, NBC (Halleck 211). Evidence concerning the US military exerting any direct control over NBC's programming is subjective at best, but the run-off from the military to

RCA, RCA to GE, GE to NBC, and from NBC to children's cereal, has never been so direct (Halleck 211). According to Halleck, despite the increasingly democratic nature of technology (the Internet, of course, being the great leveller), sentiments regarding resisting this model and challenging the media elite have been met with a general feeling of apathy from the all too conformist public. "The profound alienation and impotence that most people feel about technology," writes Halleck, "has overshadowed any embryonic thoughts we might have had about the liberatory potential of most machines" (Halleck 213). Instead of using these new technologies to our advantage, western society has been relatively docile when it comes to contributing or, parish the thought, challenging the media elite. Almost universally it seems that "everyone but the radical right and the corporations have been effectively intimidated" form participating (Halleck 213). Because after all, "how can we challenge the media RCA/GE is in charge?" (Halleck 213). But these challenges are not in born, in fact, according Halleck, many of these apathies of been constructed by the hegemonic and capitalist elite. Despite the desire for more democratic media and more democratic technologies, people have been conditioned, so to speak, not to resist.

Halleck gives us an extensive examination of the history of democratic media, and demonstrates how apathy and user-passivity have been built-in to many modern communications devices. For example, the first mass produced affordable Kodak camera, the Brownie, was not packaged with an open-ended, apolitical user guide (Halleck 218). Rather, the packaging for the Brownie included several advertisements depicting proper use of its camera (documenting

birthdays, holidays and other special occasions). In addition to this visual rhetoric, each instruction booklet was coded with an oddly passive, domestic undertone; it seemed that the "domestication of imagery was continuous with the domestic fate of women: safe in the home, the kitchen, and occasionally on vacation" (Halleck 218). According to Halleck, "in their advertisements and hobby books, Eastman Kodak never suggested that Brownie owners take pictures of their workplaces, or that they record their rank-and-file strikes" (Halleck 218). Again we see a partial paradox for the capitalist, ideological elite: on one hand, there is the drive to produce more democratic products and increase sales. Personal cameras are especially appetising from an economic standpoint, as they tend to encourage repeat consumption in the form of hobbyist magazines, additional film, accessories et cetera. On the other hand, home cameras, camcorders and personal computers alike, all hold within them the potential to erode the capitalist elite's hard-fought ideological constraint and hegemonic power. Because after all, if everyone is capable of producing their own histories, news and images, the messages presented by the mainstream media can become diluted amidst a sea of free choice.

No telecommunications technology encapsulates this duality better or more frequently than the Internet. The "frontier" metaphor is perhaps the most used, and accurate, description of the free-market's battle to control, corral and contain cyberspace. As in the case of the American west (at least in those cinematic Hollywood nostalgic pieces), the first people to lay claim to the west were those mavericks seeking refuge and riches outside of the conformist,

hierarchies of the big city. For a time, these pioneers and frontiersman were reasonably successful in their venture into the unknown and the unsettled. But once the groundwork and familiar infrastructures had been established civilization soon found its way into the west, along with annexation, law and everything else that capitalism and governments bring with them in order to retain their dominance. This battle for control and dominance can be seen on the Internet as we speak. As Michael Strangelove writes, author of *Empire of the Mind; Digital Piracy and the Anti-Capitalist Movement*, "almost immediately after business first rushed onto the Internet back in 1993, the call was heard that this wired frontier must be civilized" (Strangelove 79). After this initial push, Strangelove continues, "'the marketplace,' cried business leaders, will bring order to the chaos of cyberspace… the online audience must be corralled in corporate Web sites, eyeballs must be owned, surfing habits 'monetized,' freeloaders converted into online subscribers, and piracy reined in once and for all" (Strangelove 79). During this initial period, the call to bring the Internet into the fold could be heard time and time again (Strangelove 79). "To many," writes Strangelove, "it seemed as though an anomaly had appeared within the social system, one that had to be normalized or dire consequences would certainly unfold" (Strangelove 79). To this end, many from within both the economic and academic centers felt that it was only a matter of time before the Internet was completely brought to order, commercialized, homogenized and made to fit within the broader, more traditional, forms of mercantilism – a theory that has commonly come to be known as the "normalization thesis."

The "normalization thesis" argues that, over time, the Internet will inevitably come to be dominated by corporate interests and commerce (Strangelove 80). According to the normalization thesis, there are three immutable signs foreshadowing the hostile takeover of the web. First, there is the "oft-repeated assertion" that online culture and life is quickly evolving into a straightforward mirror of offline media content and the surrounding commercial media system (Strangelove 80). The second sign follows that, as the gap between online and offline culture closes, Internet audiences will soon return to the familiar state of relatively passive consumers (Strangelove 80). Finally, there is the distinct belief that online users and audience members have been so conditioned by previous media delivery systems that they wish to return to a more passive, constrained state (Strangelove 81). However, the transition from the Internet as smooth space to striated space[7] has been more difficult to facilitate than spectators and commentators had initially thought. As Strangelove writes, "the existence of rampant digital piracy, child pornography, sexual predators, hate speech, organized crime, networked terrorist organizations, fraud, persistent hacker attacks, identity thieves, prolific virus creators" and, if I may add, alternative media outlets, green agitators and dissenting bloggers, is proof that the Internet will prove more difficult to castrate, wrangle and brand than was hitherto imagined.

Meme Warriors and Culture Jammers Rejoice Online

[7] In "A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia," Deleuze and Guattari draw a distinction between what they call smooth and striated space. Smooth spaces exist outside of any state or formal institution, while striated spaces are often seen as being restrictive and sedentary.

The disruptive potential of the Internet stems from two mutually reliant tactics. First, the Internet creates a certain degree of freedom for those looking to mobilize and share information across a seemingly infinite number of audience members. Secondly, the Internet grants users free access to the building blocks and tools of digital culture jamming. Michael Strangelove ascribes much of this potential to the Internet's inherent fluidity of meaning, signs and ideas (Strangelove 90). According to Strangelove, the Internet holds a great potential to destabilize capitalism's management of the consumer's mind (Strangelove 99). "Until the mass adoption of the Internet," writes Strangelove, "consumers had very little access to information that was not produced by the economic system, and the physical range of their discourse was limited to their local social networks" (Strangelove 99). Here again we see strong undertones of Habermas' public sphere. To no small extent, the success of capitalism throughout the 20th Century owes a great deal to the concentration of ownership over the means of communication and the ability to control access to alternative sources of knowledge (Strangelove 99). The Internet then poses a legitimate threat to corporations and governments because the Internet provides the consumer with an extensive communication and knowledge resource. Furthermore, the Internet provides its subscribers with all of the necessary tools and information to resist, subvert and challenge mainstream society. For example, in 2003 the word "boycott" appeared more than 4,000,000 times across the Internet, each one calling for the immediate, global boycott of various products and companies (Strangelove 100). By 2004, the number of times "boycott" appeared had

increased to more than 7,450,000 times (Strangelove 100). According to Strangelove, this number represents "substantial consumer dissatisfaction and activism" (Strangelove 101). Nike, the Gap, Microsoft, Disney, Fox News and more, were all in the crosshairs of petitioners and activists looking to take a stand against the spread of global capitalism. But aside from forming petitions and crafting online slam magazines against corporations, the web presents activists with a far more devastating tool for chipping away at the corporate sector; online culture jamming.

The Internet is not a free zone. Despite appearances, the Internet is owned like every other piece of ad space or media property. What makes the Internet different is the fact that the web is much more difficult to manage. Furthermore, unlike older forms of media such as newspapers or television stations, the content that appears online can come from anywhere. This means that although the Internet is a primarily a tool for and by the media and corporate elite, it is a tool that is open and available to everyone with an Internet connection. This is perhaps most evident in the ways that trademarked brands and faces have been hijacked by a rogues gallery of online activists.

In many ways, capitalism organizes our lives and our societies along lines of products and invented meanings. As Strangelove cites, "diamond rings would not be on the fingers of so many brides if the consumer's mind was not subject to powerful methods of persuasion ad socialization" (Strangelove 135). Over the past seventy years, this system of persuasion has been protected from external forces and identity hijackers through various regulatory systems and intellectual

property clauses. As Strangelove writes, "trademark, copyright, and other aspects of intellectual property law give corporations extensive rights over the meaning and representation of their brands, logos, products, and corporate identity" (Strangelove 135). For Strangelove, this poses a massive problem within consumer culture, as large aspects of individual identity and meaning are locked away and protected as private property (Strangelove 135). The Internet offers up a platform to dismantle many of these restrictions because it expands the formerly closed circle of producers and meaning makers.

Strangelove uses the image and icon of the Barbie Doll to emphasize how the corporate sector has failed to anticipate the Internet's potential for resistance. According to Strangelove, "Barbie's position in the cultural history of the Net reveals the extent of the failure to extend property rights and definitional control into cyberspace" (Strangelove 137). Barbie is an international cultural icon, with sales reaching into the billions of dollars. Much of the success of Barbie has hinged on Mattel's ability to control and manage every aspect of the Barbie identity. Perhaps this is why Mattel has taken such exception to any and all unauthorized use of Barbie's image or likeness. As Strangelove writes, the illegal sail of DIY and appropriated Barbie art over the web has transformed a corporation's "pink princess" into the "Sorority Slut Barbie, Hacker Barbie, Tourette Syndrome Barbie, Lesbian Bondage Barbie, Gangsta Bitch Barbie, Exotic Dancer Barbie, Transgendered Barbie and Barbie on the Cross" (Strangelove 138). Mattel has not taken to this unlicensed use of their product lightly. Each year Mattel doles out millions in legal fees fighting to regain the reins

of their wayward brand. However, for every parody website or naughty Barbie auction that Mattel's lawyers take down, another one springs up in its place (Strangelove 138). It is an uphill battle to be sure, but one that proves the disruptive power of the Internet.

The Internet user's appropriation of the Barbie icon is not unlike the tactics of the poor outlined by Michel de Certeau. In "Making Do: Uses and Tactics," Michel de Certeau made a distinction between the meaning-making schemas of the power elite and the subordinate spheres. The primary question for de Certeau is how meaning making is accomplished by those without the means to produce messages, commodities or laws. According to de Certeau the have-nots, the subordinate classes, simply *make do* with what is immediately available to them. To illustrate this point de Certeau asks the readers to examine their own consumption practices with regards to television. Do television audiences accept broadcasts passively or actively? "What," asks de Certeau, "do they make of what they 'absorb,' receive, and pay for - what do they do with it?" (de Certeau 31). The same logic can be applied to all products produced by the dominant culture. Do the sub-sets of the parent culture passively accept the meanings attached to commodities, or do they attempt to invert this meaning and re-appropriate them into their subaltern lexicon? We see then that different people, all occupying the same general location and who function within the same society, can have contrasting sets of meaning and understanding.

According to de Certeau, society is composed of two sets of meaning makers: those who create meaning and those who subvert meaning – those who

use "strategies" of implementation and those who use "tactics" of inversion. De Certeau describes "strategy" as the "circulation (or manipulation) of power relationships that becomes possible as soon as a subject with will and power (a business, an army, a city, a scientific institution) can be isolated" (de Certeau 36). A strategy is the implementation of an ideal or attitude that functions to maintain the status quo and the values and ideals of the parent culture.

A "tactic," on the other hand, is a "calculated action determined by the absence of a power locus" (de Certeau 37). It is the act of deterring prescribed meaning, reclaiming culture and challenging the parent culture. An active tactician must then "play on and with a terrain imposed on it and organized by the law of a foreign power… A tactic is an art of the weak" (de Certeau 37). Perhaps more so than any other communications medium, the Internet is a soapbox that is equally tall for both the rich and the poor. It is easy to see how "strategies of implementation" could be imposed on the masses by a medium such as television or radio, but these strategies seem much more difficult to plan and manage over a medium that is inherently rhizomatic as the Internet. This is not to say that the Internet is completely democratic, after all, HTML coding does require a certain degree of know-how before one can begin coding and posting, but the tools of the trade are all online for those looking learn.

For this reason the Internet has breathed new life into Culture Jamming and corporate activism. In "Culture Jamming," Klein describes the act of culture jamming as "the practice of parodying advertisements and hijacking billboards in order to drastically alter their messages" (Klein 230). "Since most residents can't

afford to counter corporate messages by purchasing their own ads," they are forced into either defacing or decentering the messages produced by the dominant order (Klein 230). These defacements can take the form of parody, the carnivalesque or simple inversion of meaning. "The most sophisticated culture jams," according to Klein, "are those which hack into a corporation's own method of communication to send a message starkly at odds with the one that was intended" (Klein 232). This act of inversion is a practice which Lasn identified as "detournement."

Similar to Klein's "culture jamming," "detournement" refers to the subversion of dominant meaning (Lasn 126). Classic examples of detournement are those which "mimic the look and feel of the target ad, prompting the classic double take as viewers realize what they're seeing is in fact the very opposite of what they expected" (Lasn 127). Strangelove's "Lesbian Bondage Barbie" is an extreme example of this, but many have found less controversial uses for detournement. For example, the crystallization of the mainstream news aesthetic has all but solidified a style and mode of address for those looking to produce and disseminate alternative media. In the hands of a talented web designer, the messages being produced by independents online are virtually indistinguishable from their "legitimate" counterparts. One example, however sensational, is theonion.com. The Onion has recently begun producing their own news video podcasts, that are available to download free of charge via their web server. Not only are their broadcasts entertaining, they also offer a certain degree of social commentary regarding the way news is usually handled and reported. The end

result is a program that not only looks and feels like a regular news show but one that could also pass for legitimate news.

Online Journalism and the end of Corporate News

In this final section I hope to outline the value of alternative news blogs and independent news outlets as important agents of change for combating the exclusive, anti-democratic mainstream media. I will argue that not-for-profit news blogs are inherently anti-hegemonic because their entire structure and presence is an affront to the ways that news is produced and information is exchanged. As I have outlined in previous chapters, a fundamental problem with the mainstream news is that it is non-participatory. From a business perspective, this makes perfect sense. From an egalitarian perspective, the consolidation of the media couldn't be more harmful. Zero participation translates into fewer voices, fewer perspectives and soon the whole of the news media begins to resemble Chomsky's propaganda model.

The online alternative media offer a non-corporate perspective on world events. While the structure, aesthetic and style of the alternative media may resemble its corporate counterpart, the voice, perspective and intent have been lobbied without fear of censorship of reprimand. As I discussed in chapter one, one of the biggest constraints over corporate journalists is the fear of being censored or fired. Once more, within the mainstream news media reprimands and heavy censorship are often unnecessary within the news room as gatekeeping and selective hiring have helped to ensure that only like-minded

individuals have a chance of making it to screen or print. Online journalists, on the other hand, are free from these kinds of organizational pressures. Online journalists and bloggers answer to no one and are free to report and produce unconstrained content. And, with the war in Iraq now in its seventh year, the importance of this fact has never been greater.

The fact that corporate news is broken and fails to live up to its promise of painting an objective, unbiased account of the world is never more apparent than during times of war. Strangelove cites Robert McChesney as saying that, "every time the United States has gone into a major conflict the media has acted as a 'superior propaganda organ for militarism and war'" (Strangelove 183). "This observation," continues Strangelove, "provides the historical context for the events that unfolded in the American media after 9/11" (Strangelove 183). In the days that followed September the 11th American journalists were completely barred from deviating from the mantra that America is the greatest nation on the planet and that their enemies are pure evil (Strangelove 184). As Strangelove describes, this fact was made pure and simple during Dan Rather's appearance on Larry King Live (Strangelove 184). When asked about the terrorist attacks, Rather very plainly told King that "they hate us because they're losers and we are winners… There are just evil people in some places" (Strangelove 184). Rather's sentiments, although not always expressed so candidly, were echoed ad nauseam throughout the corporate media. It seemed as if the whole of the industry was ready and willing to fall in line with Bush's mantra of "if you are not with us you are against us". As Strangelove notes, "along with reproducing elite

opinions and ignoring alternative perspectives, the press suspended criticism of President Bush" (Strangelove 184). This bias was especially prominent when you compared content from CNN World with CNN's domestic content.

As Strangelove notes, "faced with serving an international audience that was hostile to the US -lead war, CNN produced two different version of the war: a critical one for global audiences and a sugar coated one for Americans" (Strangelove 184). One can only speculate about the reasons behind this media wide self-censorship, but one common conclusion has been that news outlets were coerced at the organizational level into promoting a rampantly pro-American sentiment before signing the nation up for a full-scale war. The online news community, on the other hand, presented a much more varied depiction of the events immediately after the 9/11 attacks. Certainly there were several online reiterations of the message being espoused by the mainstream media, but in addition to these carbon copies, there were also several personal and accounts of the events following the attack. Conspiracy theorists came out in droves online, as well as those detailing personal accounts and perspectives of where they were when the crisis occurred (Strangelove 186). Other sites gave a platform for people stranded in Airports and in the Manhattan core the opportunity to post messages to their loved ones indicating that they were safe and unharmed. But the real power of online journalism lay in the speed and quantity of the reports that came pouring in. As Strangelove describes, the key difference between the Internet and commercial news was that, following the attacks, "all points of view appeared, and instantly" (Strangelove 186). According

to Strangelove, "all voices of dissent appeared within the Internet before they were heard in mainstream media" (Strangelove 186). From the incredibly personal to that of the recreational journalist, the Internet offered a platform for all opinions regardless of which side of the political lines they fell.

Since September 2001, a lot has changed in the field of online journalism. The number of online blogs and news feeds has grown from the tens of thousands to the tens of millions, and shows no sign of slowing down. The major application of the online not-for-profit news channel isn't that it gives people the ability to create and spread information, or that it grants people access to contrasting sources of news and information. The true application of online journalism rests in people's ability to interact and give feed back. Unlike the one-to-many model presented by televised or print media, online news is very much an open dialogue. As quickly as material is posted online, there is a venue and forum available to reply, comment, add to or challenge what has been posted. For this very reason, online journalism is disruptive to the mainstream news media. At its very structure, online journalism is set up to be more accountable and more participatory. Unlike the televised news, for example, net-news is established as a dialogue, rather than a transmission that is to be taken at face value.

Conclusion

It is hard to imagine cracks and fissures within a global, rhizomatic, information network but they do exist. Just as in the case of minority views or

personal accounts of 9/11, within a control society whenever something is left out of the headlines or too quickly forgotten by the mainstream press there will always be host of individuals from around the world ready to pick it up again. Abu Ghraib is an obvious case. Soon after news of the story first hit the airwaves people from around the world were twisting the images into their own forms of resistance. From iRaq (a political play on the iconography used to promote iPods) to more poignant sculptures, city murals and digital artwork – the images from Abu Ghraib have been used as the raw materials fuelling politics around the world (Apel 95). Even more astounding, once these images and articles find a home online there is little that can be done to stop their spread. Websites can be shut down and, in extreme cases, hard drives can be seized but there will always be mirror sites and viral messages circulating to keep minority viewpoints alive. Deleuze once said that the brain is the ultimate conduit mediating between the Inside and the Outside (Deleuze 176). Ideas are thought before they are ever uttered just as ideas have to be spoken before they can become political. Under the society of control, I would like to suggest that the Internet, despite its shortcomings, has become the new frontier mediating between the interior and the exterior. It is the new meeting place for circulating ideas and opinions and becoming political. Like all things political, the ideas and subversions that materialize online may only appear for a moment, "and it's that moment that matters, it's the chance we must seize" (Deleuze 176). And just as in Deleuze's musings about the limits of thought and politics, the only limit to this new tool is our belief in our ability to make change.

We need not look any further than the coverage of the Haditha Civilian Massacre and the Abu Ghraib Prison Scandal in the online press to see evidence of within hours of the Abu Ghraib story first hitting newsstands activists, political agitators, bloggers and artists were online giving their own interpretations of the story. The bloggers at antiwar.com, for example, published some of the more damning images from the scandal, many of which the American mainstream media had otherwise refused to print. The images published on antiwar.com were much more visceral and violent in nature and left very little room for political rhetoric or dismantling. Even Senator Inhofe or Rush Limbaugh would have found it difficult to dismiss these images as blatant acts of torture. Likewise, in the aftermath of the Haditha Civilian Massacre, bloggers and eJournalists rallied together to bring the facts about Haditha to life. Truthout.org, for example, covered the story to the best of its ability, and even provided readers with a forum to leave comments, ask questions, and keep debates about Haditha opened to both sides of the American political spectrum. Neither truthout.org or antiwar.com come close to matching the resources that CNN, Al Jazeera or Fox news have access to, yet the journalistic spirit and rigor that is so sorely missing from the international media giants is present and thriving within them. What separates these online, grassroots journalists from their mainstream counterparts is a willingness to ask questions and seek truths, and the freedom to do so without concern for the bottom line.

> What we lack most is a belief in the world, we've quite lost the world, it's been taken from us. If you believe in the world you precipitate

events, however inconspicuous, that elude control, you engender new space-times, however small their surface or volume. It's what you call pietas. Our ability to resist control, or our submission to it, has to be assessed at the level of our every move. We need both creativity and a people. (Deleuze 176)

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